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A TYPICAL ARAB

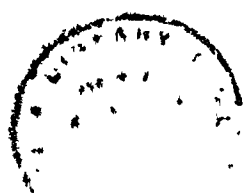
on 15 October, 2018

THE ARAB AT HOME

BY

PAUL W. HARRISON, M.D.

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To
Abdul Aziz bin Saoud
Abdullah bin Jelouee and
Abdur Rahman bin Sualim
three of my best friends

PREFACE

This book is not intended as a description of missionary work. It is an effort to picture one of the peoples for whom missionary work is done, and to show the normal and indispensable place that such work has in their future progress. It is based on fourteen years' experience as the representative in Arabia of the Trinity Reformed Church of Plainfield, N. J., twelve of which were spent in the field. My indebtedness to the Rev. John Y. Broek, the pastor of that church, can not be expressed.

The book owes much in the way of criticism and correction to my sisters, Mrs. Perry Swift and Mrs. Henry C. Harrison, and more to my wife who has been the inspiration for the book and for the work on which it is based. Many of the illustrations I owe to my friends in Arabia. Few of them were taken by myself. The frontispiece, a photograph of which I am very fond, is used by courtesy of Victor and Company of Baghdad.

Finally I am indebted no little to the publisher's editor, Miss Henrietta Gerwig, for her thorough and painstaking work in following my book through the press, in America.

P. W. H.

S. S. *Berengaria,*
March 11, 1924.

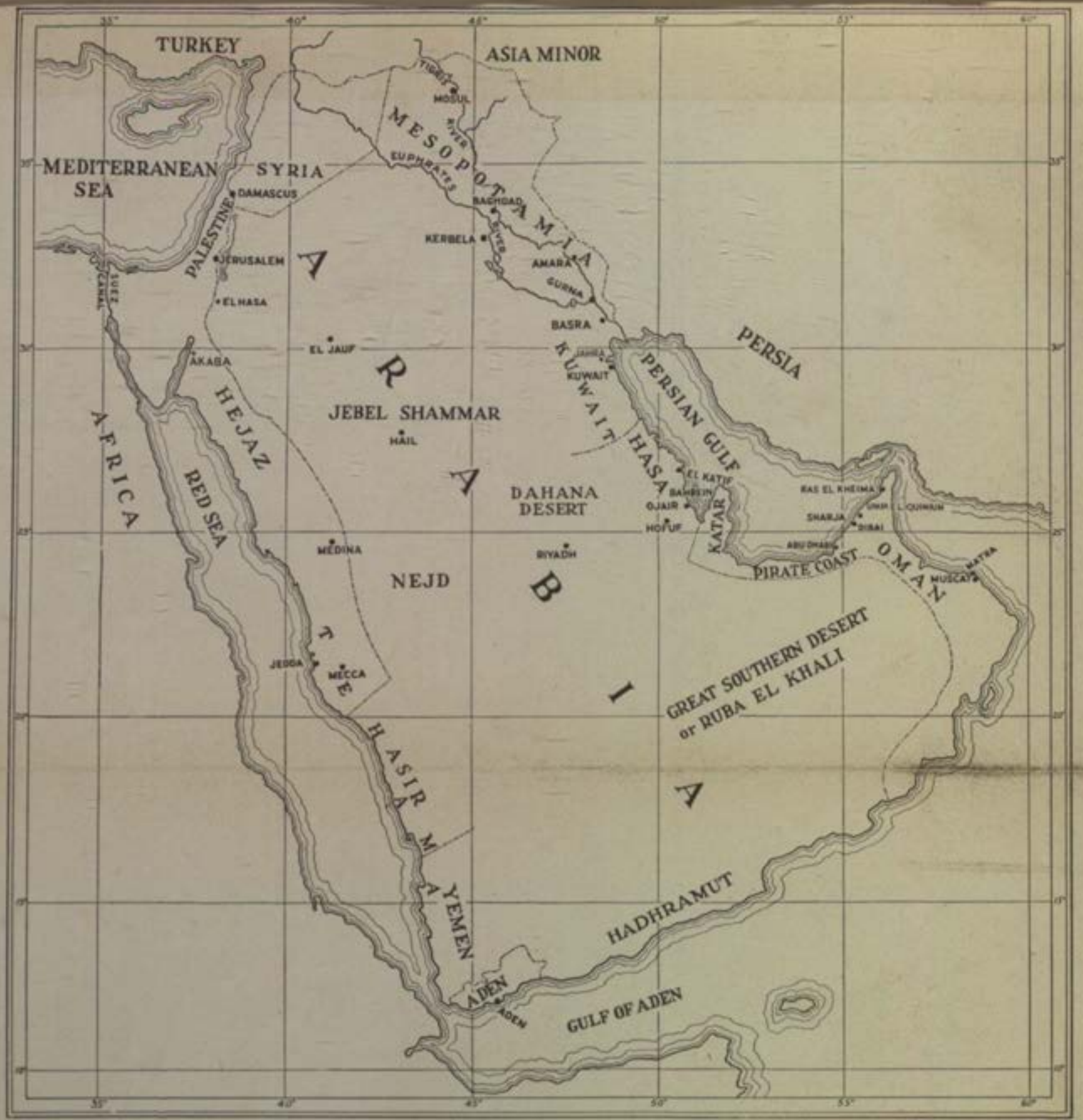
EDITOR'S NOTE

Except in a few instances, the spellings of the proper names used in this book are those of the Encyclopedia Britannica. The Century Dictionary usage has been followed for oriental words. The most common alternative spellings are noted in the index.

Since the book went to press, the death of Abdul Aziz bin Saoud has been announced. No confirmation of the report has been received up to this date.

H. G.

New York,
Aug. 27, 1924



MAP OF ARABIA

Drawn by Charles A. Pearsall. Scale, 300 miles to an inch

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THE ARAB AT HOME

CHAPTER I

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE ARAB

TO the casual stranger traveling for the first time in Arabia, few things seem more remarkable than the physical qualities that enable the Arab to cope with his unfriendly environment. The Arab is a son of nature and his appearance makes a vivid impression. Moderately tall, almost always lean and hungry-looking, with a prominent, more or less aquiline nose, his whole physical form appears as a setting for his magnificent black eyes, which seem to pierce one's very soul. A fat, lazy-looking Arab is an anomaly, to be found only in the cities where unusual temptations to luxury have been encountered. The Arab is a falcon. His lean, erect, sinewy body is built to endure fatigue, and the lines on his face tell stories of a life full of hunger and hardship, and innocent of most of the amenities that are a matter of course with us.

His endurance is a proverb. The stranger in Arabia hires camels and rides with a caravan. The Arab camel-man walks all day, driving the camels through the heavy sand and over the rocky roads of the desert, and when the hard twelve or even sixteen hour *trek* is finished, the Westerner is usually more fatigued than

the Arab who has walked along by his side and who in addition has done the chores of the caravan. These desert Arabs are incomparable walkers, and frequently messengers with important letters will cover long distances in an astonishingly short time. Between Hasa and Katif, in eastern Arabia, stretches a desert road of perhaps one hundred miles, and messengers have told me of covering that distance in less than two days.

The Arab is a splendid scout. His sight and hearing may be no better than ours, but his natural abilities together with lifelong training make the sands of the desert an open book. As the caravan marches along, the desert newspaper is read. "Ah, three days ago a flock of gazelles passed here," and "Here is the track of a wolf that was following them," or "This is the track of a *dhabb,*" the large desert lizard which the Arabs regard as a great delicacy.

However, their ability to read the language of the sand and plain goes far beyond such a b c's as that. "Now what do you think of this?" announces one of the caravan's outriders. "Ibn Khalid's caravan passed along here four days ago. He had twelve camels with him, and five men."

"Were they well loaded?"

"No, only three of them were loaded at all, and the loads were light. Two were carrying dates and the third rice."

"Yes, and his fine white camel, the one he bought a year ago from Ibn Ali for three hundred *riyals,* has gone lame."

Expressions of appreciative sympathy are heard from all the caravan. To the stupid Westerner the thing seems uncanny, and the Arab's effort to show how sim-

ple it is to read the book of the desert only increases his feeling of amazement. If some one could devise an alphabet in which "A" resembled a gazelle track, "B" that of a wolf, "C" that of a lame camel, the Arab should learn to read in a few hours!

The different tribes vary in their proficiency, but the Al Murra are the acknowledged masters of this art. One of the British political agents of Kuwait, the late Captain William Shakespear, told of testing his Murra guide very carefully. He traveled a great deal in inland Arabia, and was equipped with the instruments necessary to determine his location. He kept a careful map of all his trips. "Now," he said one day to his guide, "we may want to return to our camp of several days ago. Which is our direction?"

The track during the intervening days had been a winding and indeterminate one, and the necessary course had already been determined with instruments. The guide sat and considered for a few minutes, reviewing in his mind the journeys of the past few days.

"To reach the camp," he replied, "we must strike off in this direction," indicating the same course as the instruments.

A far more striking test of this particular Arab's sense of locality and direction and distance came at another time. The caravan was almost out of water and the nearest well ahead was at a hopeless distance. There seemed to be no alternative but to return to a nearer well in the rear. "No," said the guide, "I do not think it is necessary to do that. We will lose four days' time, and for the accomplishment of your program our time is already short enough. There is water, if God wills, a trifle to our left and two days' journey ahead."

"Are you certain of this?" asked Captain Shakespear. "To spend two days in reaching that point and find nothing will be to risk dying from thirst, for our water will not last over two days."

"If the Lord wills," replied the guide, "there is water there."

Captain Shakespear reflected that the guide would have to go without water if the rest did, and indeed considering his loyalty he probably would be the first to go thirsty, so the caravan started off, with no path to follow and no landmarks to guide them. Their only compass was the instinct of a Murra guide. Two days later, in the afternoon, the guide remarked that they appeared to have arrived at the proper place, and he turned to the side a few hundred feet, dug down into the sand a few inches, and the water was ready. The locality was without any landmark that a Westerner could fix for its identification. It was simply a few square yards in the limitless waste of the Arabian desert.

"When did you learn of this water?"

"Oh," said the guide, "three years ago I was passing along here and found this water-pocket more or less by accident."

"Have you never been here since?"

"No, never either before or since."

It is not surprising that the Arabs have a proverb that a Murra Arab taken on a three days' journey blindfolded, and at the end of that time compelled to bury a *rupee* in the sand by night in the midst of a trackless desert, can return ten years later and get his *rupee* with no difficulty whatever.

Aside from this remarkable physical acumen and endurance, probably the one thing that impresses itself most



A DESERT WELL

vividly upon the mind of the Westerner in Arabia for the first time is the cordial hospitality of the people. The way that strangers expect and receive entertainment in the houses of sheikhs and prominent Arabs is a beautiful thing. "Honor the guest, even though he be an infidel," runs the Arab proverb, and it is obeyed. We of the West are far behind the Oriental in this regard. The poor as well as the rich recognize the sacredness of the bond of hospitality. The Arabs even tell of a thief who broke into a house at night and after looting the place found a small gold box which seemed very valuable. After some effort he was able to open it. It contained a box similar in character but smaller, and this when opened held a third. After a number of boxes had thus been removed, the inner casket was revealed, and it contained some fine white powder. The thief was very curious to know what sort of powder was preserved with such extraordinary care, so he tasted it. It was salt. Salt is the bond of hospitality in Arabia, and the robber, having thus unwittingly partaken of the hospitality of the house, immediately replaced all the stolen articles and left. Robbery was nothing to his conscience, nor murder if it should prove to be necessary, but he was not so abandoned a criminal as to break the laws of hospitality. Arabia is normally a land of continual raids and of a very loose conception of public order. Assassination is not uncommon, and nearly every sort of crime of violence occurs frequently, yet I never heard of the laws of hospitality being violated and of a man being killed while a guest except in one solitary instance, and the story passed from mouth to mouth as the recital of some great enormity.

Just now Arab hospitality is at its best in the court of

Ibn Saoud, the ruler of the Wahabi state of inland Arabia. During one of our visits to Riyadh, the capital city of the Wahabis, a son of the Great Chief was married. The feast with which the nuptials were celebrated was a tremendous affair. The large courtyard was covered with scores of the circular mats around which the Arabs sit when they eat. At each mat sat from four to six Arabs, and attendants brought in huge bowls of cooked meat and great dishes of boiled rice. As fast as one group was filled to repletion, they arose and gave way to others who took their place. Four hundred sheep were killed for this feast, as well as ninety-three camels. The quantity of rice consumed must have been enormous; I was not able to get even an estimate of it. The guests came from far and near, and no one went away hungry. These affairs are not by special invitation. That would seem preposterous to an Arab. They are for all the world, or at least for all of it that cares to come. Ibn Saoud's guests are from all over Arabia, from Yemen and Hadhramut in the extreme south of the peninsula and even from the Mesopotamian deserts above Baghdad and as far north as Mosul. At times he entertains over a thousand men in the various guest houses of the little city. They are royally treated and may stay as long as they wish. There is food for man and beast, good food and liberal quantities. Besides this there is a gift for every one. The poorest Bedouin goes away with a present of some sort; a new *aba*, perhaps, and a certain amount of money. The men of higher station and the visiting chiefs, of course, receive much more elaborate presents.

The Westerner who spends long days with an Arab caravan, traveling over great lonely stretches of desert, and who is welcomed in Arab tents and courts in this

gracious spirit of hospitality, has even in his first casual encounters an unusual opportunity to come into genuine contact with Arab life. Soon he begins to have some insight into the Arab mind, a mind remarkable for its constant agile activity, and equally remarkable for its inability to concentrate on anything except a specific object within the range of vision. The average Arab is charmingly simple and direct in his mental processes. It seems impossible for two ideas to remain in his mind at once. Furthermore he thinks of concrete and definite things; the vague and the indefinite and the philosophical have little place in his thoughts. This trait is what makes the Arab so abrupt in speech as often to seem discourteous. The townsman, and especially the Arab of the coast city, has learned something of the art of making himself agreeable even if he does not feel that way, but such artifice is not for the Bedouin. "Come here, you!" shouted one of them to the British Political Agent, who was an honored guest of the tribe. The Political Agent's retinue from the town were horrified and expostulated hastily at so discourteous a mode of address, but the Englishman laughed and told the man to talk as he was used to doing

This very engaging frankness of the desert is shown at all times. During one of our trips the conversation turned to the sandy desert through which we were passing and the surprising amount of vegetation that appeared in the spring, which is the season for the very slight rains of that region. Later almost all of this growth dries up, and there remains dry fodder sufficient to feed a large number of sheep and camels. The strange thing was that no such grazing seemed to be done. The Bedouin camel-man agreed to my remark that it would make splendid pasture but explained that there were no

wells in the district, so it would not be possible to bring goats and camels there to graze, since they must be watered at least once a day. Efforts to dig wells in that vicinity had been numerous, but had never met with any success. I went on to ask how deep such wells had been dug, but the conversation seemed to weary the man, and he assured me that doubtless, if the effort were made, it would not be difficult to find water.

My surprise at such an ending to the conversation was great, but I was soon enlightened. "What do you mean by telling the *Sahib* that water could be found here if men would only dig wells?" asked another of the camelmen, who had arrived in time to hear the last few sentences of the conversation. "Don't you know that the effort has been made repeatedly and has always failed?"

"Oh," replied the first Arab, paying no attention whatever to my presence, "I get tired of this man's talk. I could not stop his questions by telling him the truth, so I told him something else. I thought that might suit him better."

Whatever is on the Arab's mind flows easily off the end of his tongue and whatever he wants he goes straight after. One day I was walking along one of the principal streets of Hofuf, the capital of Hasa in eastern Arabia. Hofuf may be a city of thirty thousand inhabitants. It was the middle of the afternoon, and the street was full of people. A Bedouin came up to me with a look of great surprise on his face. "Open your mouth!" he demanded abruptly, much as if I had been an intelligent camel or horse. It was a somewhat startling request under the circumstances.

"What is the matter? Why do you want me to open my mouth?"

"Open your mouth," insisted my new friend with the usual Bedouin economy of words. "Open your mouth. I want to see."

"Yes," I persisted, "but what do you want to see? There is nothing remarkable in my mouth."

"Open your mouth," again demanded this son of the desert, obviously annoyed at so much unnecessary talk. "I saw something in there that looks like gold."

So I opened it up, and he gazed in rapt astonishment. "Abdullah," he shouted, "Abdul, Karim, Khalid, come here," and soon there was a ring of admirers all studying a gold tooth for the first time. I have been in many embarrassing situations, but standing in the middle of a busy street with my mouth wide open and a dozen interested Arabs examining my teeth remains a unique experience. *"Mashallah,"* finally said the man who had first demanded that I open my mouth. "Did it grow that way?"

"No, no, it did not grow that way. It was put in, to replace one that fell out."

More expressions of astonishment. "Have you doctors that can do things like that?"

"Oh yes, and many of them."

I am sure that at least a dozen Bedouins lost their reputation for truthfulness that night when they got home. Each told his wife with graphic gestures and much exaggeration that he had seen a man with a gold tooth, and each one was told, I do not doubt, that his veracity had been under suspicion for a long time and now there was no question but that he was an undiluted liar.

The single women of an American mission station often find this simplicity and directness of speech to which the Arab is addicted somewhat embarrassing. "What!

you not married yet,—but you certainly are of marriageable age. You must be at least twenty."

"Yes, I am twenty-five."

"But why then are you still without a husband? You are good-looking. Is your temper so bad that no man will take you?"

I remember an amusing example of how little the desert Arabs care for the opinion of foreigners. One of the members of our caravan was a grizzled old veteran of many years' desert experience. Probably he had never met a white man before. He observed that when the time came for morning prayers, this strange foreigner did not pray with the rest. The old man was greatly exercised in mind over this astonishing fact. Apparently he feared that the earth might open and swallow up the caravan for harboring such a monster of iniquity. He sought out the leader of the caravan and communicated to him the terrible news.

"That man does not pray."

"Yes, yes," soothingly replied the more sophisticated caravan leader, "I suppose that may possibly be so, but you know he is a great doctor and Ibn Saoud is bringing him to Riyadh to treat the sick there."

The old partriarch answered with a voice full of scorn for the foreign infidel, and of more scorn for this renegade Moslem who would introduce such irrelevancies into a discussion which concerned matters of life and death. I can see him still as he replied, "I tell you, the man does not pray." It was with considerable difficulty that the old man was mollified sufficiently to accompany us.

But the Arab is an incorrigible democrat and apparently there are no circumstances in which he will not respond to simple democratic friendship. Even this old Bedouin,

so exercised in mind because the foreigner would not pray, came afterwards to be fast friends with us. I found him at noon of the same day trying to mend his cloak. He had no needle, nor even thread, but by raveling out a thread from his cloak and tying the frayed edges together, he made a certain amount of progress toward getting it mended. We were armed with a considerable equipment for just such emergencies, so I hunted up for him a fine fat needle with a big eye and a long, strong, black thread, such as we use to sew on shoe buttons. Then I went up and introduced myself. "My father," I said, "I see that you are mending your *aba*. I have here a needle and thread, and if you would care to use them, you are more than welcome. I have plenty of thread, so if you care for more, come and help yourself. Only let me have the needle back when you have finished." The old man seemed quite astonished at such an evidence of humanity on the part of a man who did not pray, but his surprise did not hinder him from making good use of his opportunities. He used up that thread and came back twice for more. At the end, with his own and his little boy's *aba* carefully mended, he returned the needle. After that, the matter of neglected prayers ceased to trouble his mind. It is true that religion is the most important thing in life to the Arab, far more important than to the average Westerner, but the Arab is born a democrat and all the efforts of his religious leaders to make him over into a bigoted aristocrat are only moderately successful. Even the fanatical Wahabis from the inland country, who are the most orthodox of orthodox Mohammedans and extremely intolerant of infidels, invariably soften and become warm friends after they are acquainted. I have never yet been in a caravan where

we were not all on the best of terms by the end of the journey.

But the missionary doctor who visits the Wahabis must be prepared for many hard words. Nothing but an official invitation from the Great Chief, Ibn Saoud, makes such a visit safe. On one such trip we inquired the price of a kid from a caravan of these puritan "roundheads," for we needed some fresh meat. They found out that it would give nourishment to a hated infidel, and informed us that a hundred dollars would not buy one. However, they came to the doctor in large numbers for all sorts of treatment. They do not shrink from surgery, showing rather a nerve and courage and when necessary an indifference to pain that are magnificent. "Oh, Infidel," shouts one of them as he enters, "where are you? I want some medicine." When they come into the consultation room and submit to examination, they show at the same time a remarkable confidence in the doctor and a contempt for him religiously which form a rather astonishing combination. In time they come to make the best and most loyal of friends, but they are not to be approached except on the basis of an absolute equality, and it is a mistake either to patronize them or to fear them. The man who can restrain his temper when it tends to boil over at their epithets of contempt soon finds himself charmed by an independence and fearlessness that are hardly to be equalled elsewhere in the whole world.

And once the Arab is won over to real friendship, he accepts even the infidel as one of his own kind and is loyal beyond measure. I remember, when we were taking a boat trip which was part of my language study program, that a strange Arab face appeared one day over the river bank, and gazed with considerable surprise at the unusual





ARAB HOSPITALITY

passenger the boat carried. "You there," he cried in anything but a complimentary manner, "what do you mean by carrying that Christian around with you?"

My personal servant and the boat captain were the only ones with me at the moment. One seized a large club, which was waiting to be used as firewood, and the other a short, heavy iron bar with which Arabs pound their coffee. They ran up the bank toward this man who had so grievously insulted their guest. The man held his ground pretty well, but they extorted some sort of satisfaction from him, and he finally left.

I questioned them with some surprise when they returned. "What made you so angry with that man?"

"He called you a Christian."

"Well, that is what I am."

"That is all right," said the redoubtable warriors. "We know that you are a Christian, but he is not to call you one, not while we are around."

In the early days of the occupation of Kuwait as a mission station, the medical work occupied a tumble-down Arab house. The door was never locked, so that those needing help could come in at all hours of the day or night. The doctor slept in the middle of the yard and was easily accessible. Early one morning, long before the sun was up, the doctor was awakened by some one pulling on his sleeve. Night calls are uncommon in Arabia and usually mean that something serious has happened. So the doctor woke up with great speed. A withered old Bedouin woman sat next to his bed, a woman with lines of privation and hardship on her face but with the charming frankness and kindliness of the Bedouin in her voice.

"Sahib," she said, *"Sahib,* wake up."

"Yes, my mother, I am awake. What is the trouble?" with visions of some shooting affray and a desperately wounded son dying somewhere in the city.

"*Sahib,* I am sick. I want some medicine."

"Yes," said the doctor, now quite awake and in possession of his normal faculties. "What are you suffering from? We have plenty of medicine and are glad to help any one who needs it."

"I have a pain in my shoulder."

"And how long has this pain troubled you?"

"*Sahib,*" replied the patient old woman, "it has bothered me a long time, and I got tired of trying all sorts of medicines that the people of the tribe suggested, so I decided to come to you here. It is seven years since I first noticed it. We have been traveling for ten days to get here, and as soon as ever I arrived, I came straight here to you. I did not stop to arrange my camp or even to pitch a tent."

"You did exactly right in coming here right away," said the doctor, "and we are glad to see you. Will you be remaining in the city a few days?"

"Oh, yes, we will be here two weeks probably."

"That will be good," said the doctor. "It may require some time to give you relief. If you want to go and arrange your camp now, you will have plenty of time, and you can come afterwards to this house about eight o'clock in the morning and the medicine will be ready. It is now perhaps two hours before sunrise, so you can make yourself comfortable. There is plenty of medicine, and you need not hurry, for we will be here all day." So she went away delighted, and returned at the specified time for attention. It is a very keen pleasure to remember that gentle old Bedouin woman, who gave us the

greatest of all compliments, that of assuming that we were one of her own kind. For if she had considered the doctor a stranger, she would have waited till daylight at least. Not many achievements of twelve years afford as much pleasure in retrospect as the belief that she is still of the same opinion.

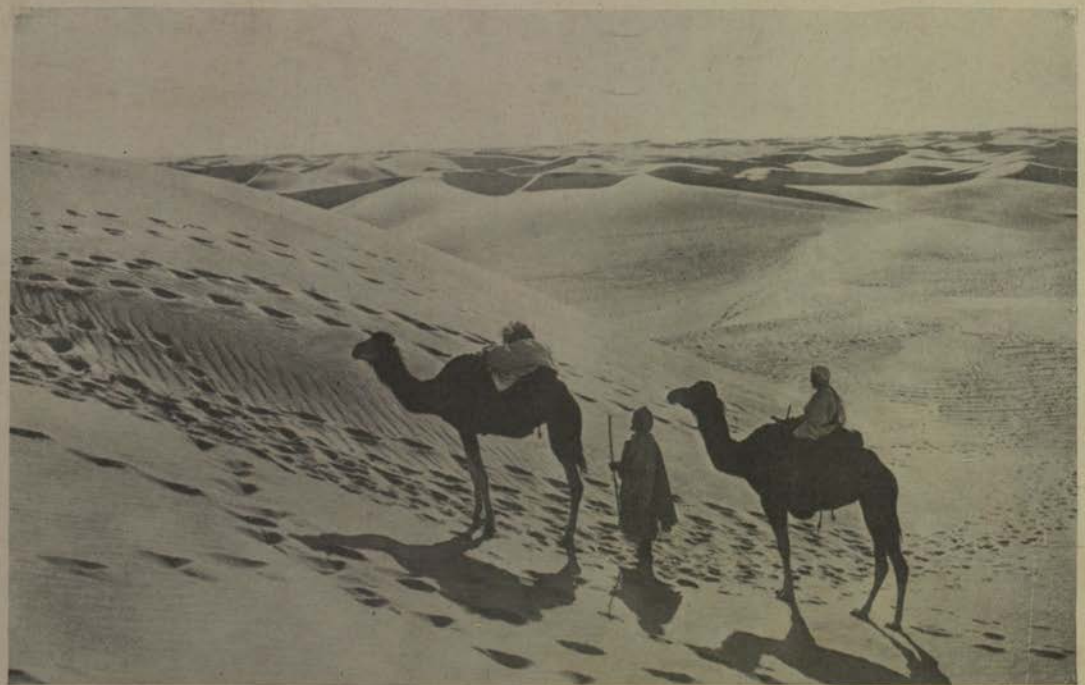
No one can learn to know the Arab in more than the most casual fashion without realizing how mistaken is our easy American self-sufficiency and our common assumption that all races are our inferiors that are backward in the arts of western civilization. Few races have the natural endowment of the Arab. Perhaps none surpass him. The outstanding task of our times is not the discovery and exploitation of the unused material resources of the world. The world is full of resources infinitely more valuable than petroleum and iron and coal. In these sister races there are treasures of the human spirit and arts of human association capable of transforming our whole outlook on life and idealizing our whole social order. The world offers no adventure so splendid as the opportunity to share in their discovery and development.

CHAPTER II

THE BEDOUIN OF THE DESERT

THE traveler in Arabia is impressed first with the desolation of the landscape. The desert, which is the real home of the Arab, includes practically the whole of the peninsula except the two southern corners and the western edge, where low mountain ranges take its place. It is for the most part a plateau rising to a height of some 2500 feet above the sea and more than that in its western part. It is not a uniform expanse of sand, as popular imagination pictures it. By far the greater part is rocky, and there is a certain amount of good arable soil. The feature that distinguishes the desert and gives it its particular characteristics is its aridity. During the winter and spring there may be as much as three to six inches of rainfall. For the remainder of the year there is none.

Except in the spring, the country is parched and dry, a veritable abode of death, and it seems impossible that any living thing should exist in it. Unless he is fortunate enough to meet some wayfarer like himself, the traveler may be on the road for days without seeing a soul. The rocky plains stretch from horizon to horizon. Sometimes the landscape is dead flat; sometimes rolling as in our western prairies in the vicinity of a great river. For some hours the traveler from the Hasa oasis near the Persian Gulf coast to Riyadh in inland Arabia passes



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SAND DUNES

over a great rocky plain which is quite black. From a distance the imagination pictures it as an immense asphalt roof covering some inferno of heat underneath, but once reached it is found so solid that it seems rather as if the very framework of the earth has been upheaved to view. The crevices and irregularities are filled with yellow sand which at times almost obliterates the black foundation underneath.

The road will run for hours over rocky plains which resemble nothing so much as well harrowed fields in the spring after they are dried out, and the memory calls up pictures of fields in Nebraska where much the same color prevails with the same rolling surface to the landscape. Fancy sees this barren country similarly covered with little green cornstalks just coming up in fine neat rows, and the soil nice and black from a rain the night before.

Such ideas are easier in the morning before the sun comes up, when the earth is still cool and the wonderful desert air, which is one of nature's tonics, stimulates the mind to activity and the imagination to beautiful pictures. Later the sun appears and all these creations of the imagination evaporate in its fierce heat. As it climbs higher and higher, the heat increases and the country no longer looks like a field in Nebraska waiting for a shower. It looks like just what it is, the valley of the shadow of death. The layer of air next to the ground is hotter than the layers above, and wherever one looks, the reflection of water is seen in the distance. When the air next to the earth has become as hot as this, small whirlwinds form easily, and several are in sight for most of the rest of the day. The day grows hotter and hotter; that water whose reflection seemed so natural proves as imaginary as the cornfields of the morning. The heat grows more

and more intense as noon approaches, till the light breeze that may spring up is like the breath of a furnace, and the surface of the ground becomes so hot that even the hardened feet of the Bedouins cannot endure it and they put on a sort of rough sandal to protect themselves as they walk. An egg can be cooked by putting it into the sand at noon. Only an emergency keeps an Arab traveling through the noon hours of a summer day in the desert.

Certain parts of the desert are vast expanses of sand, quite according to the popular imagination. It is a yellowish, cream-colored sand, and it drifts into great dunes, fifty feet high or more. In the fresh morning these great cream-colored dunes, outlined against the blue sky, which is absolutely without a fleck or a cloud, afford a color scheme that would charm the most stolid. There is not an artificial line in the picture. It is God's handiwork, unmarred by a single human element. In it is to be seen, clean and naked and beautiful, the omnipotence of God and His stern, silent beauty. His immutability is there and His strength and, above all, His greatness. "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" That may be a man, that speck on the small yellow sand dune, miles to the left. The slightly larger speck with him is probably his camel. Yes, they are moving. It is a man. Fifty miles away perhaps there is another man, who knows? What is man when one stands in the presence of the omnipotent God, with the blue sky above, as clear and bright and pure as His own Holiness, and all around the great yellow desert, as inscrutable and resistless as His own will?

The desert, terrible as it is, nevertheless has life in it. In the spring there is a little rain, perhaps an inch, perhaps as much as six inches. Vegetation appears, and in

favored localities where the water has been collected by the rock formation, it persists for some weeks. Small scrubby bushes are found which grow a little each rainy spring and then apparently wait in a shriveled and dried-up condition for the next year's rain. These attain sometimes to a height of several feet. There are even a few poor, miserable, stunted trees, which always appear half dead. They as well as the smaller plants are frequently covered with spines.

It is a little surprising that the sandy districts have far more vegetation than the rocky stretches. On those sand dunes there is a considerable amount of vegetation. There are some remarkable plants in the *Dahana,* as the Arabs call the sandy desert of northcentral Arabia. They look like milkweeds, and have a milky sap. I have seen them as green and succulent as their relatives in America, standing on the top of a sand dune fifty feet high, and this in midsummer when the thermometer must have been over 125° every noon. A very few of the smaller plants, too, retain something of their greenness and freshness even in the awful Arabian summer, but the great majority dry down to a fodder that could not be made drier if it were put through a kiln.

Perhaps an even more astonishing thing is that a number of animals manage to live in that terrible country. There is no water within their reach; at least there is none within human reach for fifty or a hundred miles in any direction. The animals are even worse off than human beings, for they cannot dig down fifty feet or more to get a drink out of a well. Yet there are gazelles in the *Dahana,* large numbers of them. Traveling in midsummer one sees them frequently, occasionally in flocks of some dozens. There are lizards of various sizes

to be seen all along the way. One large variety is about a foot and a half long, and its meat is esteemed a great delicacy by the Bedouins, who call it "the fish of the desert." Many smaller lizards are found, and a few birds. There are also tracks of a wolf to be made out occasionally, but that is a rare occurrence, as is also the sign of a fox. The lizards may be able to dig down far enough in their holes to reach damp soil, but certainly the gazelles must get their necessary water from the few plants that remain succulent and fresh in the summer months.

And there are people who live in that desert, not travelers only, but permanent residents. They live there not merely during the spring when there is a little rain, but the year around. How can men live in a country like that? The well is the answer. The little green vegetation to be seen in the spring when the meager rains come soon dries down, and the inexperienced eye of the stranger would scarcely find it. Nevertheless, it is sufficient for goats and camels and perhaps sheep to graze upon if wells can be found in addition where they can be watered every evening. So it happens that the most precious things in Arabia are the wells. Caravan routes may be crooked, but the reason is never far to seek. For three or four days camels can travel without a drop of water, but eventually they must drink like all the other animals in the world. Some parts of the desert which are richest in vegetation are quite deserted as far as human beings are concerned, and the reason is the same. In the summer when the thermometer may occasionally reach 135° at noon, it is no use to discover an area covered with abundant dry fodder. It is the well that is the essential thing. Wherever water can be secured, there men can live. It is not such a life as would be popular in



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BEDOUINS IN THE DESERT

America, but men live, and women live, and children live there, and love their desert with an unparalleled devotion. Transplanted to a real garden spot of the earth, they weep for a glimpse of their beloved desert.

The love of the desert is a very deep and a very beautiful thing. For political purposes one of these desert chiefs was urged to give up his residence in the open and arid desert and come to live in the town. The greater comfort and luxury to be found in the town were pointed out to him as contrasted with the hardships and loneliness of the desert; but the old chief did not see it that way. "In the town," said he, "I have no doubt that I shall find all the things which you describe, but out here in the desert I have my family and my goats, great distances, and God."

In such a country only one type of life is possible, and that is the Bedouin type. Some knowledge of the Bedouin, his environment and its effect upon him is fundamental in any effort to understand the Arab. The nomad tribe is probably the basis from which the other types of Arab life have been developed historically, and these other types can be most easily understood today if studied in connection with the simpler organization of the desert. The most conspicuous difference from our own society lies perhaps in the fact that all members of the community do the same thing. Some are more energetic than others, and on that account own larger herds of camels and larger flocks of goats or sheep, but the occupation of all is the same, and the standards of life differ very little.

The Bedouins are divided into tribes, and the larger tribes into sub-tribes. These tribes of Arabia are "communities of will," to use H. G. Wells' phrase, and the in-

dividual Arab is free to transfer his allegiance to another chieftain if he so desires. Such a transfer quite frequently takes place. In a loose general way each tribe has certain areas over which it grazes its camels and its goats and sheep. In proportion to the number of animals the area covered is enormous, for throughout the hot, dry summer months locations must be frequently changed and new pastures found. The prosperity of the desert Arab, poor as it is at the best, depends on a rainfall so scanty that one marvels at the existence of any life at all. There are whole districts, like the Great Southern Desert and the black plain encountered between Hasa and Riyadh, where not even the hardiest Bedouin attempts to live. In winter the temperature goes down so low that frost is seen, and in the summer the country glows with heat like a furnace. No mineral resources are known at present, and there is no reason to suppose that the most careful scientific search would find any.

Bedouins who live in the desert own a certain number of camels, and turn them out to graze over large areas. Camels require little water and can go for three days, if necessary, without a drink, an ability which adds enormously to their value in a country where it is frequently necessary to travel scores of miles to find a well. The camel is the one support of Bedouin life. Camel's milk is the principal article of diet, with a few dates for a dessert and camel's meat as an addition for feasts and high days. The hair of the camel furnishes clothes, and his back affords the only method of transportation possible in the desert. Indeed the Arab looks on the camel as God's special gift to the desert nomad, and he is not far mistaken.

Where wells are somewhat close together and the for-

age of the country allows it, goats can be kept, but these must be watered at least once a day. They furnish hair for tent-cloth, and thus it is the goat that shelters the Bedouin from the elements. In districts where forage and water are still more abundant, sheep are raised, chiefly for their wool or as articles of export. Mutton is the favorite meat all over Arabia, and although for a lesser occasion goats or camels may answer, when a great sheikh gives a feast, sheep are the animals slaughtered.

Much has been written, and justly, about the beauty and the endurance of Arabian horses, but they are not an economic asset. In Central Arabia a horse is a pure luxury. Often in summer they must live on camel's milk just as humans do. They are kept and treated as household pets and are very intelligent and affectionate. Their only function is to furnish an aristocratic mount for pleasure, for state occasions and for war. During part of the year there is abundant pasturage for them, but they are a luxury afforded only by the sheikhs and the very rich and their number is small.

There are years in Arabia when the spring rains fail partially or completely, and then the animals die by thousands, or are driven to the nearest town to be sold for a song. In such years starvation stalks abroad through the land. Little children die because there is no food suitable for such tender stomachs, and the adults are even more gaunt and thin than usual. The sheikhs are nearly bankrupted by the number of poor they have to feed, and the whole community waits and prays for more rain the coming spring.

At the best the life of a desert Bedouin is one of a poverty so bitter and deep that Westerners have little idea of it. The entire outfit of a family could be bought for a

mere trifle. Probably the only part of the outfit that would have any commercial value at all is the black goat's-hair tent, which affords a poor shelter from the cold in winter and from the heat in summer. And along with extreme poverty there goes an astonishing lack of any sense of cleanliness or order. The tent of a Bedouin could be little more disorderly if it were taken by some giant hand, shaken like a dice box, and the contents allowed to rest where they fell. The furniture consists of few things and poor. There are the remnants of one or more cotton stuffed quilts. These are both bed and bed clothes. There are a few skins to hold drinking water and a few skin basins. Some shaped sticks are tied together to make camel saddles. The outfit will also include a copper kettle for the cooking of food, a battered coffee pot for the making of coffee and usually a wooden bowl. This bowl, which may be the only eating utensil belonging to the household, has probably never been washed in its history. At times milk is drunk out of it, and at times rice and meat are eaten from it. The grease with which it is covered has long since exceeded the absorption limit of the wood and for years has been plastered on to the outside. Under such circumstances the prevalence of disease excites no wonder; the wonder is that many maintain excellent health.

The Bedouins clothes are a loin cloth beneath and shirt above, which shirt resembles a loose nightgown and reaches to his ankles. Over this is worn an old disreputable *aba* or cloak, in cut resembling nothing so much as a college gown. All of these are usually in a state of great disrepair and show an acute need of laundering. The town Arabs, who look with scorn on the desert Bedouin, assert that when he buys a new undershirt, he puts





NOMAD BEDOUINS

it on over his old one, and since none of his garments are ever removed, the older garment gradually falls to pieces and after a while disappears altogether. This story, like much of the fiction of the world, though not strictly accurate is based on painful truth, for baths are not so frequent in the Bedouin's life as they should be, and the laundering of clothes is still less adequate.

But it is easy to blame the Bedouin for being dirty. Dirty he certainly is and his clothes even more so, but what is to be expected when water is so scarce that for lack of it animals frequently go thirsty, and sometimes even men? We forget that cleanliness is a luxury, and a very expensive luxury at that. Through the summer the Bedouin women wash their hair in camel's urine because water is so precious that it cannot be wasted for such a purpose. The men apparently go without washing. Clothes require no comment, for their condition is what might be imagined. By far the commonest hunting in Arabia is the hunt for wild game in the hair and clothes. It is always successful. The ablutions required before prayers are commonly performed with sand. The delight of such people upon arriving at some place where water is abundant and where bodies and clothes can be washed is a good thing to see.

The diet of these desert Arabs is ordinarily very frugal. A drink of camel's milk and a handful of dates are a day 's rations for an adult, and more is not expected. There will also be an occasional drink of coffee, of which the Bedouin is inordinately fond. Even the poorest Bedouin tent will have some sort of a battered and worn coffee pot for this purpose. Bread is a rare luxury in such homes, and meat even a rarer one. A feeble old camel on the verge of dissolution will render a last service

to his masters in making possible a feast and a taste of meat for a large number. From camel's milk is made a sort of cottage cheese which is kneaded into little cakes much the shape and size of children's mud pies. These are plentifully mixed with hair in the process of manufacture and are baked in the sun almost to the consistency of bricks. They will keep indefinitely and form a savory addition to the diet in time of scarcity.

Occasionally the Bedouin will capture a *dhabb,* or armored lizard, and rejoice exceedingly at the kindness of Providence. Or he may succeed in catching a desert rat, or *jerboa.* In either case there will be meat to eat that night. On rarer occasions he may succeed in shooting a gazelle, and then there will be a real feast in his tent. But even at the best there is probably no community in the world that lives constantly so close to the starvation line as the Bedouin.

As a host, however, the Bedouin has no peer. The unaffected joy that is shown at the opportunity of entertaining a guest may well serve as a model for those of us who come from the more practical and unfriendly West. To sit in a Bedouin's tent and enjoy his hospitality is a pleasure to be remembered, even if the small amount of meat served with the rice be so tough that biting a piece in two is impossible, to say nothing of chewing it properly.

The very poor may sometimes flee from the demands of hospitality, but once asked they may not deny entertainment to any one. In the desert the desperately poor Bedouins avoid settling in the region of a recognized caravan track. To be compelled to entertain many guests would almost mean starvation for them, but they never refuse if a guest appears. The only alternative is to re-

main away from regions where guests are likely to be numerous. The road between Hofuf, the capital of Hasa, and Oqair, its nearest port, affords excellent pasturage for goats and camels, and water is easily available for watering the stock. The traveler, however, will probably not see so much as one tent in that whole region. Caravans are coming and going continually, and the poor Bedouin cannot possibly entertain so many. Stern necessity compels him to go where the demands on his very slender resources will be smaller.

But the finest hospitality that I have ever enjoyed has been at the hands of the Bedouins. Ten years ago in the vicinity of Kuwait we saw a good deal of them, for there is always a fringe of Bedouin tents surrounding that city. The American missionaries were far from welcome in the town. A rival Turkish doctor had been imported by a local Mohammedan society and stocked with medicines and instruments so the poor might be treated free and every excuse for visiting the missionary's establishment removed. But there was no trace of hostility among the Bedouins and it was a great pleasure to visit their tents. We had a number of patients there and had to visit them often. When the dressings and treatments were finished, we stayed and visited together. There were questions about America, and the way to come from there to Arabia, and I in my turn learned a great deal about them and their utterly poverty-stricken lives. The way in which the medical missionary was admitted to the circle as one of the family is perhaps the most prized memory that twelve years' experience affords.

In the calendar of the desert the real red letter days are those when a wedding in the sheikh's family or some other event is the occasion for a great feast. Every

one is invited, and the half-starved Bedouin, who has perhaps not had a full meal for months, makes such use of his opportunities as seems incredible to a student of anatomy. Four hungry Bedouins are supposed to be able to eat a whole roasted sheep at one sitting, and I am sure that I have seen many such a Bedouin company that would be equal to the task. An Arab feast is an interesting sight. A whole sheep must be cooked for any honored guest, even if he has only one or two attendants. This animal, cooked as he frequently is in one piece, is placed on a huge copper platter and buried in a mountain of boiled rice. Out of the sides of this mountain, which would measure several bushels in bulk and which stands perhaps four feet high, are to be seen protruding the amputated stumps of the animal's four limbs. This enormous central dish is flanked by various side dishes containing gravies and a few vegetables. Vegetables, however, are few in number and scanty in amount. The proportion of cooking fat put on the rice is an index of the cordiality of the guest's welcome. There is quite certain to be several times the amount that a western palate enjoys. Around this mountain of food with its foothills of side dishes the guests seat themselves, all on the floor. The signal is given by the host's remarking, "In the name of God." There follows a mad race against time, for when one guest arises, all must follow his example. Obviously, then, the affair of the moment is to see that in the short time available as much as possible of God's blessings shall be appropriated. The meat is torn off in quarter-pound chunks. Such a piece is put into the mouth, bitten in two and swallowed, if indeed it is treated with so much ceremony. The rice is gathered up in great handfuls and poured down the esophagus, ap-

parently meeting with no great obstacle on the way. In five minutes everybody is filled to repletion. Pounds of meat have been consumed and bushels of rice. The side dishes are empty. Enormous wooden bowls of buttermilk are brought in and the meal washed down with great draughts of this favorite Arab drink. It is not remarkable that after a feast everybody expects to take a nap. So ends the festivity and the Bedouin settles down once again to his meager and poverty-stricken existence in the desert.

Life as a nomad shepherd brings the Bedouin into naked and constant contact with nature. He is out of doors almost all of the time, and his tent with its rents and holes hardly serves to separate him from the outside world to any significant degree even when he is inside. The sun over him by day and the moon and stars by night, the long stretches of sand and the rough rocky plains, the sand storms which are the terror of the desert, the fierce heat of the summer and the frosts of the winter, all of these are his constant companions. He learns to know the wilderness as few know it. The tracks of the various animals in the sand are to him an easily legible history of the happenings of several days back. Thus he lives not simply in contact with nature but rather immersed in it. The desert may be cruel, but he pines away if transplanted. His life may be hard, but he wants nothing else.

Yet strangely enough, in spite of his intense love for the desert and its freedom, all the beauties in nature around him fall on blind eyes as far as the Bedouin is concerned. Even the desert sunset and the moon-lit sand dunes apparently stir no responsive chord in his heart. It is as if all such things had been stripped off

and cast away as useless encumbrances in the stern fight for life. He is the victim of his environment in that he suffers so desperately from poverty and want. His clothes hang in tatters and rags; his tent is cold in winter and hot in summer; his food is reduced nearly to the limit of bare subsistence. Most of his children die because of the unsuitable food, the hard conditions of life and the ignorance of the parents. The dirt and disorder in which he lives beggar description. Out of this soil springs one of the freest and most unconquerable spirits in the world, but even so it is impossible to believe that its finest development is attainable under such handicaps. The terrible thing is not that the condition in which he lives distresses his sensitive spirit, but precisely that it does not distress him at all. The Bedouin may claim to have conquered poverty. He stands forth uncrushed by its heaviest load, but his indomitable spirit has nevertheless paid a price, and a heavy price, for that victory.

Bedouin life, however, in spite of this terrible poverty and lack of the amenities that we are accustomed to regard as necessary even to existence, has in it many characteristics that we of the luxurious and effete West might emulate with benefit. Throughout the earth and almost throughout history, men have dreamed of equality. France ran with blood a hundred and thirty years ago because of man's search for it. Russia is red with the same struggle now. Men talk about it and dream about it wherever men see visions and dream dreams. In inland Arabia men practise it, and there is a charm in the dirty, poverty-cursed, arid desert that will be searched for in vain throughout the pampered and self-satisfied world outside. His sense of equality with all the world is the breath of life to a nomad Arab, and his spirit stands



BEDOUIN WOMEN

forth scornfully triumphant over the worst that environment can do to him. There is no division of labor in the desert. Every man has the same occupation and is pursued by the same gaunt specter of starvation. Every man breathes the same atmosphere of the great free desert and shares the same conceptions of God and His terrible omnipotence. How could men be otherwise than equal when they all live in the same desert and worship the same God? The hypocrisies and pretenses of caste and rank cannot live long in that country where God is so great and so terrible and so omnipotent and where men at the best are helpless insects in His hands.

The Arab is perhaps the most incorrigible individualist that the world affords. He regards any abridgement of his liberty as intolerable. His desert is a land of freedom. Everybody does what is right in his own eyes with perhaps less restraint than anywhere else in the world. To one who is familiar with the Orient, perhaps the most significant fact to be noted in Arab society is the complete absence of the caste system. The Arab knows nothing about caste. His sheikh, who has the power of life and death over him, the Bedouin regards as on precisely his own level. He expects this sheikh to rule well, to have a heavy hand for offenders, to maintain relations with neighboring tribes, to protect the poor from the rapacity of the rich. If the sheikh does not do all these things, he will join cheerfully with his comrades in assassinating him and will submit with equal cheerfulness to whomsoever may be his successor. He would be not at all nonplussed if asked to be ruler himself; quite possibly he might fill the office with credit. All this he knows, as does his sheikh. The result is a society where there is almost no feeling of superiority and inferiority,

but rather an unaffected equality among all members of the community and a good fellowship and free association on that basis which is one of the most beautiful things in the world. The women share this freedom, and are engaged with the men in practically every activity that is useful in keeping the wolf from the door. Men and women fight side by side for a naked existence, and there is no submission to anything or anybody, except to God above.

It is a hard life, but the desert is a maker of men. Women may express their feelings, their joys and their griefs, but men are expected to remain silent and self-controlled, and magnificent Stoics some of them are. An old patriarch came to the Bahrein Hospital bringing for treatment his only son, the pride of his life and the joy of his heart. They had come a long distance, two weeks' journey. The old man had the light of a father's pride in his eye and the shadow of a father's anxiety was there, too.

"My boy has been sick for some time. I have brought him here for you to cure."

My heart sank at the boy's appearance. "Does he cough?"

"Yes, he coughs a great deal. That is the trouble."

"Does he cough up any blood?"

"Yes, he has done that several times."

It gave me almost the sensation of physical faintness that one feels when in an elevator that is shot down rapidly, to see that fine old man standing there and to know what we would have to tell him, but we examined the boy carefully first. There were large cavities in both lungs. He was far beyond all hope. The whole faculty of Johns Hopkins could not have helped him. "My

father," I said, "I have no medicine that will do the boy any good."

It was easy to see that the reply was not entirely unexpected, but already I talked to a different man. "Is there perhaps some operation you can perform for him?" asked the old man slowly and gravely. "We have heard that you do many marvelous things by means of the knife."

"My father, it is quite true that we operate here on many people and use the knife a great deal, but there is no operation that will do him any good either."

"Then," said the father, "will he die?"

"Yes, he will die. He has only a few days or months at the outside. No doctor can do him any good. He is in the hands of God."

"Yes," said the old man quietly. "Praise the Lord anyway," and he turned to leave, a bent and pitiful old man. The light had died out of his eyes, and the spring had gone from his steps; he was the picture of broken grief, but there was not a tear nor a complaint, nor did his steady eyes waver as he looked straight into my own. We tried to get him to stay for a few days and rest before starting on the return journey, but his reply was simple and final. "No," he said, "we appreciate your hospitality, but the boy would rather die in his own country with his mother."

By far the most beautiful family life in Arabia is found among the Bedouins. Poverty enforces a monogamy which their religion does not require, and as might be expected, divorce is less common and the whole atmosphere of society infinitely cleaner than in other Arab communities. Often a family life is found that is very beautiful. The loyalty of the various members of such

a family to each other, the way that old and feeble members of a previous generation are cared for without question or complaint, the unquenchable cheerfulness that no misfortune or discomfort can dampen, are a pleasure to recall. The same poverty that makes polygamy impossible forces the women to be partners in all the activities of the household. There are no secluded women in this community, and the result is a comradeship and mutual helpfulness and unashamed love between a man and his wife that are beautiful to see. They share the same poverty and the same hardships. Together they watch probably two-thirds of the children that come into the home sicken and die. Bedouin families are not large, but that is not because the number of children born is small. Bedouin women also follow their husbands in war and manage the commissary department. In times of necessity they take up weapons themselves and fight.

As might be expected, the standards of morals are far higher than in other parts of Arabia. An unaccompanied girl caring for her sheep out in the desert is safe in that country of poverty and equality, of freedom and simplicity. We came from Abu Jifan once, a whole caravan of us, to Hasa, a distance of three days' journey, and from among the Bedouins that were congregated in the neighborhood of the wells of Abu Jifan a girl came along to Hasa for treatment. She rode at a distance of half a mile from our caravan all the distance to Hasa and encamped by herself each of the three nights that we were out. Not all of the men of our caravan were Bedouins. Some were townsmen, and camel-men at that, with talk as foul as might be expected from birds of passage of that variety. The first night there was some remark about the girl off there by herself, the exact import of

which I was glad not to understand, but one of the Bedouin youngsters who were with us flared back at the townsman with remarks that reduced him immediately to unconditional surrender. Every noon and every night the boy took her some of our rice and bread, and she accompanied this men's caravan, entirely alone, till we arrived in the city. I remember that same boy's earnest and simple cordiality as he congratulated one of his warm friends on her recent marriage. "May God increase your prosperity, your camels and your children."

It is interesting to observe the fundamental economic conceptions in a community as primitive as that of the desert. Contracts are sacred in Arabia, as in the West. The guest and his host are bound by a contract the terms of which are perfectly understood by both parties and are practically never violated. Many of these Bedouins enter into contracts to dive at the opening of the diving season in Bahrein, and one never hears of such a contract being broken. There is little occasion for the making of contracts in the desert, but even at the price of personal loss, a contract entered into in good faith must be carried out.

The Bedouin's conception of property, however, differs from ours considerably. To say that it is communistic is to exaggerate, but there is certainly a stronge tinge of communism about it. Property, that is to say what the earth affords in the way of food, shelter and clothes, is of value because it sustains human life. The food, the clothes and the houses that the Bedouin's world can produce, are never enough to go around. He considers them valuable simply as they minister to human need. In the oases property comes to be regarded as sacred, much as it is in the West. Beautiful houses are admired and

luxury and display have a certain number of devotees. In the desert the viewpoint is very different. Human needs and rights are always and in all circumstances the most important thing and property rights are always subordinate to them. More than that, it follows that no one, whatever his station, is entitled to more than he needs of the scanty supply of food, clothing and shelter which the world affords until every one else has had all that he needs. Concerning the surplus over and above the subsistence requirements of the community the Arab has no definite convictions, but the man who desires to live in wasteful luxury, or who hoards wealth while his fellow tribesmen starve, may expect to be sent down very promptly to the eternal fire to roast where he belongs. It is on this foundation that the obligations of hospitality are built. The traveler is a man in need—in need of shelter and of food. The mere fact that he has no money to pay for these does not modify the situation in the slightest degree. His need, in and of itself, establishes his host's obligation to feed him. No possible notion of private ownership can in the Bedouin mind establish the right of the householder to his surplus so long as a hungry guest remains to be fed.

Land in the desert is free as the air. It is practically worthless in its sterile aridity, and there is nothing surprising in the fact that private ownership has not attempted to control it. Live stock is owned individually. This type of property, however, occupies a peculiar position. Animals are privately owned, but they are the object of never-ending raids, and property rights in them are almost as far removed from our notion of private property as from communism itself. Live stock remains

the property of the owner as long as he can keep others from carrying it off and no longer. These raids are not theft in the Arab mind. The spirit is much like that of a game of football, where by craft or by superior power one side takes the ball from the other. The Bedouins are real sportsmen and take their losses with extraordinary equanimity. They hope to recoup themselves the next time and then possibly be richer than ever, for a time at least.

Two brothers came to the Mission Hospital in Kuwait a number of years ago, one of whom had been shot in a raid years before and suffered greatly as a result. It required many operations to cure him, but after a stay of perhaps five months he went home quite relieved. The sick man's brother took care of him with a steadfast optimism that was past praise. The wounded man was without property, whereas his loyal brother was a man of some wealth, but that made not the slightest difference.

One day, after they had spent perhaps four months with us, I spoke to the man about it. "You have been here," I said, "for some time now, and I understand that in your country you own considerable property."

"Yes," he said, "I am not altogether poor, though I have no great amount. It is mostly goats and camels, with a little household property."

"Well," I said, "are you not afraid that while you are away, your district may be raided and all that property taken? You have been here four months now and it will be some time still before you can leave."

"Oh," he replied, with a fine example of a Bedouin grin spreading over his face, "it has probably all been stolen by this time."

"Well," I persisted, "the matter does not seem to trouble you a great deal."

"No indeed," with an even broader grin if that were possible. "It does not trouble me at all. Just as soon as I get out of here, I will go and steal somebody else's. Who knows? Perhaps I may have more than I had before."

The tribal fights that keep the country in a continual state of turmoil are little more than glorified raids for the sake of plunder. They intensify the poverty of the community, for legitimate trade is handicapped, and this irregular exchange of goods cannot in the nature of the case benefit the whole society, however much it may temporarily enrich individuals. But life without the excitement of these raids seems to the desert nomad a tame and a stale thing, hardly worth living. On the other hand, personal property, such as is kept in tents, is as sacredly individual as it is with us, and its theft is keenly resented. The conception that every man's home is his castle is one of the most fundamental ideas of the Arab, and when the crew of a gunboat many years ago attempted to search the inner quarters of a house in Dibai for firearms, the resulting indignation was so intense that foreigners found themselves unable to enter that district for nearly ten years. The household belongings that the Bedouin keeps in his tent may be poor things but they are very much his own.

This life of the desert, with its poverty and hardships and its primitive economic conditions, has nevertheless so worked its charm on the Bedouin nomad that he longs for nothing else. The Bedouin with his intense individualism seems particularly adapted to the desert. He loves its vast distances and its solitude. Anything less

spacious chafes his spirit and he looks with contempt and pity on the poor creatures that are willing to spend their days in the narrow confines of a town. This pity is for the cultivator and equally for the land-owner and the merchant, who so far worship their bodies that they will swathe them in silk and deck them with gold, a thing permissible for women, but contemptible for a man. The hardest work of the desert Arab is concerned with leading his flocks and with breaking up and repitching camp. As a result, he develops a great distaste for manual labor. He regards it as degrading, and no small amount of his dislike for life in a town rests on that fact. Digging up the ground, patiently caring for plants and crops, and all the work of the agriculturist he looks on as beneath him. Free men were created for something better than that.

It is the impression of a stranger to the country that not a blade of grass or a single date palm could be raised in all Arabia except in the oases where the gardeners work. The Arabs tell us that this is far from the truth. There are many places where water can be found close to the surface and where gardening could be carried on profitably. In connection with the *Akhwan* movement of puritan Wahabi Mohammedanism that has swept over all inland Arabia in the last few years, one of the efforts of the leaders has been to settle a certain number of the new converts in towns and villages. Altogether some sixty-five new settlements have been started since the inception of the movement. Doubtless most of these are very small, but there are a few of considerable size, and two or three are small cities of perhaps five thousand inhabitants. The Arabs insist that there are many other such places, where communities might spring up

if the Bedouins were willing to settle down to that sort of existence.

But the Bedouin, even though he knows of these places, does not care to give up his free desert life for the hard and disagreeable labor of the towns. He is faithful to his camels, and to his goats and sheep if he is fortunate enough to have them. He loves these animals and not one of them lacks a personal name. The little lambs and kids will be carried in his arms when the road is rocky or steep. The work of a cultivator, however, he hates, and he will nearly starve before descending to such a level as to engage in it. He looks down upon the townsmen with a lofty scorn and thinks of their hard labor as unworthy of men, fit rather for animals. This remarkable man regards himself as heaven's favorite, and he exhibits a contempt for the rest of the world and a satisfaction with himself and his life that would be sublime if they were not terribly pathetic.

Yet far from being ridiculous this Bedouin of the desert is one of the most splendid figures of our time. Out of that fearful poverty which amounts to constant semi-starvation, out of a lack of cleanliness that is continual degradation of the spirit, out of an isolation and an ignorance that make him a provincial in spite of himself, he stands as the world's supreme example of that Liberty, Equality and Fraternity that have been the dream of the ages. Tied down and limited by the lack of all material things, his spirit looks on them with indifference and cheerful contempt and pines away only when immersed in the obese and self-satisfied materialism of the town. He rises triumphant over his environment by the sheer strength of his spirit. Ignorant of all the wis-

dom of books, he has attained to that supreme wisdom which is a secret hidden from most schoolmen. He has learned that the world and all its material blessings are trifles compared to the things of the spirit; that the only things that are important for us to know are how to worship God and how to associate with our fellow men.

It is by the things of the spirit that the Bedouin lives. Take him away from his beloved desert with its poverty and death, its aridity and loneliness, and he will languish although his stomach may be full and his bed soft. Let him breathe the air of the desert's freedom and equality and hospitality, and his cheerfulness is unquenchable, even though his belt is tightened because of hunger and his flocks and herds are dying of thirst. The Bedouin's cheerfulness in the face of adversity is a proverb. His happy-go-lucky spirit bows to the pressure of no adverse material conditions whatever. Perhaps it is because he has so few of the various luxuries of this world to enjoy that he looks on them with such great contempt. Doubtless also his poverty has much to do with the emphasis he puts upon the things of the next world as compared to the affairs of this one. His hopes are centered the other side of the grave. To the Bedouin God is actually the greatest reality in the universe, and the greatest task of life is to please Him. Few men anywhere in the world consider their religion a matter of such vital moment as do the Sunnis, or orthodox Mohammedans, of the Arabian desert, particularly in the inland regions which have been shaken recently by the great *Akhwan* revival. We shall have occasion in later chapters to discuss the religious conceptions and practices of the Arab in more detail, but no description of desert life would be

complete without at least an indication of the tremendous significance of his religion in the life of the desert nomad.

If the Bedouin were a symbol-loving Oriental, he would worship the desert. Being rather a practical and materialistic Semitic, he worships the God of the desert. Mohammedanism is little more than the Bedouin mind projected into the realm of religion. The Arab faces God as he faces the desert. Here is a vast omnipotent environment, which rules his life and which reduces him to insignificance and even nothingness in comparison. By conformity to its laws he hopes to live, and as a usual thing he can. But there is an element of caprice about the desert which makes it at times utterly cruel and ruthless, and from that ruthlessness no amount of humble acquiescence or of vigilant effort will save him. This is exactly the picture of the Moslem God. Unlimited omnipotence, governed as a usual thing by law, and usually rewarding obedience with His favor, He is still tinged with unaccountable and unpredictable caprice, and is essentially pitiless in His power and magnificence. It is the image and superscription of the desert. Long before Mohammed wrote this picture of God into the Koran, God Himself created it in the desert, and so stamped it on the Bedouin's heart. It is because Islam contains that picture that it has marched victoriously through thirteen centuries and faces the chaotic modern world with its pride and power still unbroken.

CHAPTER III

THE OASIS COMMUNITY

THROUGHOUT the desert, wherever sufficient water can be found for irrigation, there we have an oasis. Some are of large size. The Hasa oasis, the largest in Arabia, is an irregular strip of land twenty miles long and half as broad situated about forty miles inland in the district of Hasa on the East Coast. It is thickly scattered over with wells and gardens. Probably a hundred thousand Arabs live there, about thirty thousand of them concentrated in the capital city of Hofuf. An oasis is a beautiful thing, standing out green and fresh in the midst of the parched and desolate desert.

The soil of Arabia is good soil and wherever water has been found, it bears good crops. In some districts, as in the territory about Riyadh, the capital city of the Wahabi state of inland Arabia, the soil is of the very best quality. Even where it seems to be clear sand, as in the village of Jahra near Kuwait in northeastern Arabia, it still produces excellent crops of alfalfa if sufficiently irrigated. Doubtless there are places where no crops could be grown, as on the great, black rocky plain between Hasa and Riyadh, and indeed on much of the rocky desert, but it seems that wherever water has been found, there at least dates and alfalfa can be grown, and there a community of permanent residents settles.

With the exception of the flowing springs along the

strip of lowland close to the sea, practically all of this water is from wells. There appear to be no flowing springs very far inland. There is one spring in the Hasa oasis about forty miles from the sea that waters gardens for ten miles, and at its source a small canoe could be used on it for perhaps a mile. A walk along that stream of water, as clear as crystal and so beautifully blue that it might have come from the sky above rather than from the earth beneath, is a lesson in the possibilities of beauty even under the most unfavorable conditions. The banks are lined with beautiful date gardens, and the path is an aisle between lofty and dignified palms. Stretching out on each side are fields, some of them the solid dark green of alfalfa and some the lighter green of the rice crop. There are peach orchards and gardens of pomegranates, fig-trees and rose-bushes. It is a beautiful walk.

The distance of the water level from the surface of the ground in these oases varies greatly, and that within short distances. In Riyadh, for instance, the water comes from wells whose depth is about ninety feet. The supply is adequate and never seems to fail, even in dry seasons, though the water level falls at such times, but at a depth of ninety feet the labor of raising the water by the primitive means available in Arabia eats up all the profits of the gardening. As a result only the sheikhs have gardens there. Possessing large capital they can disregard an occasional crop failure. The father of the present ruler is responsible for the statement that not over half the years show a real profit from the operation of the Riyadh gardens. Within five miles of Riyadh, however, are villages where water can be secured at a depth of twenty to thirty feet, and there, as might be expected, gardening is very profitable. Land for the purpose is

valuable and all the available water is carefully used.

Compared with western standards, gardens in Arabia are small and cultivation intensive. Practically every garden has a grove of trees and in their shade is found the well which makes cultivation possible. The method of raising water from such a well is interesting. Men use it all over Arabia and also in India. A donkey, an ox, or even a camel furnishes the power, and a very considerable efficiency is secured. The water is drawn up in a great skin bucket, which carries water of perhaps one-fourth the weight of the animal pulling. An ingenious arrangement of a second rope tied to the funnel-shaped bottom of the bucket, empties it automatically when the ground level is reached. The animal, as he pulls this huge bucket of water to the surface, descends an inclined plane dug out of the earth at a pitch of perhaps twenty degrees. As he comes to the end of his roadway, the bucket reaches the ground level, automatically empties itself, and then descends as the animal climbs slowly back to the top of his toboggan slide. These animals frequently work in batteries of four, all their four buckets bringing water from the same well. The pulleys are arranged on a high framework above, and since pulleys and axles are both made of wood, the air is filled with a curious semi-musical squeak as the work goes on. A single man or boy can superintend the work of four such animals, and the amount of water that can be raised is considerable. It is hard work for the beasts, for they must pull going down and climb a steep hill to get back to the starting place. In summer, when water is in great demand, the music of the water-wheels can be heard throughout the entire night. The animals work in relays, but the men have longer hours, and the twenty-four

hour shift is not unknown when necessity arises.

The care of these draught animals is one of the duties of the gardener. It is quite impossible for the gardeners to do without them, except the few near the coast whose land is watered by running springs and who are therefore saved this hard and tedious work. In such cases the increased profits, however, go to the man who owns the land rather than to the man who works it. In Katif practically all the gardens are watered by springs and no lifting of the water is required. In Hasa most of the water must be lifted perhaps thirty feet to the garden level. It is impossible to see that the standards of living among the cultivators of the two places are perceptibly different, although the gardens of Katif are far more valuable and yield a greater income to their owners.

Providing water constitutes by far the major effort connected with gardening, and the water is therefore very carefully used. The garden is skilfully terraced, and a little runway is constructed to the roots of each date palm and to each square of the field. The water is lifted high enough to give it a good pitch as it flows through these channels, and the flow from the well to the field is rapid. A circular dike surrounds the roots of each date palm. These palms may be planted in regular rows, and the resulting aisles and avenues are very beautiful. The squares of the field vary in size with the pitch of the land, and are separated by small dikes, perhaps six inches high. Where the pitch is steep, they are small, and where the field is more level, they can be very large. Different crops require different amounts of water, and all require more in the hot summer than in the cooler spring and winter. The quantity that is needed is considerable at all times, and the work seems never to stop. In the bet-





OASIS SCENES (1)

ter gardens there is an effort to have the water carried through cement-lined waterways to avoid waste, and it may be carried in this way for some miles. This particular feature, however, has not been given the attention it deserves, and nothing is more common than to see water wasted in passing through a long sandy waterway, when every drop is seriously needed.

The one crop that is universal is dates, and date culture is the one thing that Arab gardeners know. Evidently more human life can be supported per acre by date culture than by any other crop that can be raised in Arabia. There are many varieties of dates, and the Arab has a different name for each stage in their development; indeed the student is told that there are five hundred different names for the date in Arabic. The date palm furnishes food and much more than food. The townsman's house is built from it, and it is his main fuel supply. Mats are made from its leaves and beds and furniture from its wood. It thus supplies shelter and food, furniture and fuel—nearly everything, in fact, except clothes. Life in an oasis centers about the date palm just as life in the desert centers about the camel.

The various processes of date culture present many features of interest. In the spring the land must be spaded over. It is ploughed if there is sufficient area unencumbered by trees to make ploughing possible. The ploughs in use are nothing more than crooked sticks, and the resulting effect on the surface of the ground is like what we know as harrowing. There is manure to be bought and spread over the fields and gardens. In Hasa and the older oasis settlements this is a very important matter. In the gardens of Mesopotamia less stress is laid on it, for the soil there is very deep and almost inexhaust-

ible in its fertility. In Hasa, although the supply of water is unusually good, the soil is poor. Manure is a carefully hoarded commodity, and is sold at a dollar per donkey-load. The spring work includes not merely the preparation of the soil and its fertilization with manure, but also the trimming of the trees and the sowing of such various small crops as the garden can afford.

The old dry fronds of the date palms must be cut off in the spring, leaving only the green and fresh growth of one season. The date gardeners construct from such frail-looking material a surprisingly tight and efficient shelter from the weather, and one that will last for upwards of ten years. Later in the season the butts of these fronds are cut off from the trunk, leaving a neat-looking palm, and also furnishing the principal fuel of the community. This fuel is light but exceedingly satisfactory for cooking purposes—the only purpose for which the Arab uses much fuel. A date palm may live for fifty or a hundred years, but eventually it dies and then its trunk is sold for lumber. A more unsatisfactory lumber for building purposes or fuel could hardly be imagined than this soft, porous, spongy wood, but the rafters of the houses are usually made of it and also the small bridges over the irrigation canals. There is nothing else, so it is the commonly used wood of the community.

Early in the season the flowers of the date palm make their appearance in great clusters that are several feet long. The gardener must bring a sprig of flowers from a male tree and shake the pollen on the flowers of the female tree. Every gardener plans to have one or two male trees to furnish pollen, and if he has not, he must buy from those who are better supplied. This pollenization of the flowers is quite a laborious process and takes

several days. After it is completed, the clusters of female flowers are carefully tied into place, so that as the stalk grows longer, the clusters of dates will hang down properly between the great fronds and be easy to pick when the time comes. In some localities it is necessary to wrap up the flowers and even the small green dates in rags or in soft palm bark to protect them from the sun and the wind.

During all this time the irrigation of the gardens is carried on without interruption. The dates develop, and after three months the early varieties are ripe. The Arabs have early and late varieties. The earliest are called the "ninety days" dates—the name indicating the time from flower to ripe fruit. In the region of Katif there is a considerable trade in what goes by the name of *"sulug."* This is a surprisingly sweet dry product which sells in India and elsewhere at a high price as a sort of confection. To make it, dates of a certain variety are picked when still hard and green. They are full size and sweet to the taste, but woody and disagreeable to eat. After being boiled for a few minutes, they are dried in the sun. *Sulug* season in Katif is a time of great excitement. Enormous kettles are in operation everywhere and huge fires are kept going under them. Fuel is in great demand, date trunks being especially prized for this work. When the large bunches of green dates have been brought from the trees on the backs of donkeys, they are held for perhaps five minutes in the boiling water and then removed, carried to some conveniently arranged shed and carefully dried. It is a good deal of extra work, but the price paid for the dates so treated more than repays the extra labor.

Dates are eaten as soon as they are ripe, but fresh

dates could not be kept the year through, much less be shipped. Accordingly those not desired for immediate consumption are left to dry on the trees. After some weeks, when they are dry enough, they are cut and carried off in bunches to the camps of packers, where they are packed into the wooden boxes that have become familiar to Americans. In the smaller oases they are not packed in boxes, for there is no idea of exporting them to America or England. For local consumption in Arabia they are packed in old discarded water skins or in old kerosene tins. The tins have served as water vessels for many years before coming to this final end of their earthly service.

Alfalfa is the only other crop of any importance aside from dates. It is cut every six weeks the year through and apparently the yield is usually very good. Other products than these two are incidental luxuries. Pomegranates can be raised if there is room and water for them, and several varieties of limes and lemons. Figs will grow, and peaches. Even grapes can be raised, but for some reason they do not seem to be popular. In season the rich can enjoy a large variety of fruits and a smaller variety of vegetables. Pumpkins, egg plant, okra and onions are among the latter. Tomatoes have been introduced recently from the West and are growing in popularity. A poor sort of muskmelon is also grown and does very well. All these are raised and marketed by hand labor. Careful intensive cultivation must be the prevailing method in such a community of small acreage and dense population. The land is spaded and pulverized by hand, and all the subsequent cultivation is of the same sort. There is little place for labor-saving agricultural machinery.





OASIS SCENES (2)

Why is not the area of cultivation increased? Near almost every oasis there is an abundance of excellent agricultural land, which could be utilized if water were available. There is a more or less continuous effort to discover new wells and so increase the size of the oases, and occasionally these efforts are successful. There are also areas that could be brought under cultivation far away from any permanent settlements—or at least so the Arabs say, but the antipathy of the Bedouin toward hand labor makes starting a new oasis difficult. The introduction of crude oil engines has been urged as offering greater efficiency in pumping and so making possible larger gardens. The present ruler of the Wahabi state is trying the experiment, but it is not likely to help materially. Most wells have a certain capacity per day that is easily reached, and it is possible to get out of them all the water that they are capable of furnishing by the Arab system of skin buckets and donkeys. Crude oil has to be imported from a great distance, and it is doubtful whether it will be found of sufficient advantage to lead to its permanent use. A recent attempt to utilize windmills offers more promise, and this particular experiment is being watched by the sheikhs with great interest.

By far the largest class in an oasis community is made up of the date cultivators. They live in the town and go out to their work every morning. The distance is small, and they would not think of living in isolated houses in the gardens. The terms under which the date cultivator works are hard and oppressive. Contracts with the owner of the garden run for one year only, and at the end of that time a new agreement must be made. The gardener must deliver, not a certain percentage of the crop, but a fixed number of skins or tins or boxes of dates

to the land-owner. In addition he must deliver a certain amount of alfalfa if he raises that crop and of various other vegetables and fruits, depending of course on what the garden raises. The element of chance is thus borne entirely by the gardener. An extra good year brings with it unusual profits. The gardener, however, is by no means as happy over such an occurrence as might be expected, for one of the results of a good year is increased rent for the year following, and the gardener fears that he may lose in the future all he is gaining in the present. Moreover, there seems to be a good deal of competition on the part of the gardeners and this keeps the rents high and the compensation of the gardeners low. The rent is regularly kept as high as the common run of crops warrants. Even the dry date fronds and the butts are brought under tribute. There is no competition on the part of the land-owners, for of course the amount of land available in any oasis is fixed. The discovery of new wells widens the oasis boundaries, but very slowly and uncertainly. The surplus population must look elsewhere for employment and livelihood, and under these circumstances it is natural that the land-owners should be able to keep the remuneration of the gardeners down to a very low figure.

As a matter of fact, however, the gardeners do not starve nor even come near it. Although the land-owners would undoubtedly be able to keep them down close to a mere subsistence level, they do not press their advantage to its limit. When an unusually good year comes, the gardeners reap the benefit of it, whereas when an exceptionally bad year comes, they can almost alway have their contracts altered. In such a year the stipulated number of skins of dates could only be delivered by borrowing

money and buying them in the open market at a high price. The gardener would be reduced to bankruptcy by any such requirement. Indeed it is doubtful whether he could find any one who would lend him the money for such a purchase. So in case the crop is an almost complete failure, the gardener goes to the land-owner and asks to be relieved of a certain percentage of his contract obligation. The land-owner is not always willing to grant this request, and if he is not, the matter is carried to the governor, who usually sees to it that starvation conditions are not enforced. In this he has the unqualified support of the community as a whole. It is the function of a ruler in Arabia to modify contracts and agreements that result in oppression and suffering.

There is also a far more potent force which operates to keep the terms of the contracts between owners and gardeners at a level of comfortable existence. The land-owner spends little time in his garden, but it is a very valuable piece of property. It would even have a considerable value as a piece of bare land with its water rights, although no useful agricultural land in an oasis is kept idle in such a way, for arable land is too scarce to be wasted. It is always in use for gardening in one form or another. As a result, its value lies principally in its date trees, in its perfected irrigation system, in the various permanent improvements such as walls and houses that it possesses. These improvements are expensive but they require little for upkeep, so the running expense is not great. A good gardener will keep them all in repair. Under his hand the value of the garden will steadily increase. He will carefully manure the soil. The irrigation system will be improved. Each old and decrepit tree will be removed, and in anticipation of this necessity, a

new date sprout will have been planted some years before, close to the trunk of the old tree, so that no vacant areas develop in the garden. The date trees will be well cared for, and the other crops will be profitably developed. Now it is true in Arabia, exactly as in any other part of the world, that half-starved and discontented men are not the best tenants. The value of a garden depreciates in such hands. The result is that the rental level is placed so as to allow the gardener a good shelter from the weather, an abundance of food and adequate clothes. He is always moderately comfortable, and on feast days is able to put on a surprisingly gay appearance. There are, of course, the differences between individuals that would be expected. Some are shiftless and on the verge of starvation, and some are surprisingly prosperous even to the point of having small amounts of money saved and perhaps lent out at interest. One wonders whether these men ever come to own their own gardens. Such a thing may occur, but I have never heard of it.

The foundation of the economic life of the oasis itself is agriculture, the raising of dates and alfalfa. But the oasis is not a unit by itself. It is part of the desert, the center indeed of desert life. Even a community as primitive as the Bedouins' must be served by a certain number of artisans and tradesmen, and these are never found out in the desert with the tribes. They are located in the oases. Compared with the desert the oasis has a social life and organization more nearly like our own at home. Men no longer have the same occupation, think the same thoughts and live the same life. A division of labor appears, much the same as we see the world over, and a division of society into classes is the inevitable result.

Next to the cultivators the largest and most interesting

class in an oasis community consists of artisans. Although a few simple machines are in use, most of the artisan class are hand workers in the strictest sense of the word. Industry is about where it must have been in Europe before the days of steam engines and power machinery. I have seen a factory in Hasa where between one and two dozen hand looms were working. The laborers are paid from two and a half to four *rupees* a day, depending on the amount of work they turn out, and the product is sold by the owner of the factory for whatever profit he can make.

The largest and best organized industry is that of the weavers, who make the cloth for the outer cloaks which are worn everywhere in Arabia. The spinning of the thread used by these weavers is a household industry over the whole peninsula. Nothing could be simpler than the small stick with a little hook in one end which serves as a distaff. This is neatly twirled as it hangs from the hand at the end of a piece of thread two feet or more long. As it spins around, the wool is carefully fed into the top of the thread, and as that is twisted into thread, more is added. As soon as the thread becomes inconveniently long, it is wound on to the stick and the process continued. Thread thus spun may be coarse or it may be surprisingly fine. It is sometimes dyed, but the three ordinary colors, white, black and brown, can be secured by selecting the natural wools of those colors. There is always a market for this thread. Every Bedouin woman, when she has no other occupation, seems to be spinning, and every superannuated old man as well. It is the one way of picking up an honest penny that is always open.

The weavers buy the different grades of this locally spun yarn, and also import specially fine grades from

Persia, where the people are better craftsmen than the Arabs. Even the Persian yarn is not fine enough for some of their weaving, and the very fine yarns are imported from England. There is no direct commerce with England, but many of the local merchants go to Bombay and secure there the finer grades of English yarn.

This industry is by far the best organized of any in the city. The looms of the weavers are quite ingenious machines. There is a factory system and the actual work on the looms is done by men who are paid piece-work wages, the machines themselves and the profit of the industry belonging to the owner. It is hardly necessary to add that he is by far the richest of the group, although on occasion he may work at a loom himself. A dozen or two of these looms may be set up in one courtyard. The air and the light are good, and the workmen keep such hours as they wish, each being assigned to a certain machine. With intelligence and aptitude, the wages earned are such as put the weaver on a plane rather above the average of the artisans around him. The air of contentment and of generally distributed prosperity among the weavers is very gratifying.

The tailors are the next largest industrial group in these oasis towns. They are not so well organized as the weavers, and the factory system is less developed. They work in large rooms, sometimes with twenty to fifty in a room. Some of them are employees of the owner of the establishment, but in this industry there is a good deal of friendly association of congenial operators, and the exact terms vary with different establishments. Most of the work is still on a more or less individualistic basis.

The actual shaping of an Arab garment is a simple process, for Arab garments are not intended to cling to

the body. Undergarments are like enormous, loosely fitting nightgowns and the outer cloak is a still more flowing affair. One might imagine that two six-foot squares of cloth had been sewed together at the top and sides with a hole left in the top seam for the head and each of the upper corners left open for the arms. To make such a garment into an Arab cloak, it would only be necessary to open it from the neck to the ground in front. These cloaks are known as *abas,* or in the southern part of Arabia as *bishts.* Of course they are not constructed in the manner described. Two horizontal strips of cloth three feet wide are used to make an *aba.* The strips are laid in place and sewed together, and the tailors might better be called embroiderers, for the edges of the *aba* must be worked in scarlet and gold thread, and the collar must be decorated with embroidery over a strip perhaps two inches broad. The more expensive the *aba,* the greater the amount of embroidery on it. The religious leaders of the Bedouins, and indeed the entire Wahabi sect, forbid the wearing of silk or gold in any way, so their *abas* are more modest.

The coppersmiths are a considerable community in all these towns. They are skilled artisans and some of them are real artists. Their principal products are coffee pots and other cooking utensils. The making of coffee in Arabia is an elaborate function and every householder of importance has a battery of coffee pots that may number ten or a dozen. Three must be used to make coffee properly. The patterns of the different regions vary considerably, and great pride is taken in having a really artistic collection. The universal favorite is the model that comes from Constantinople and Damascus. Not only is its shape especially graceful, but it is made out of

cast brass, and its surface polishes most beautifully. The Hasa coffee pots have a more squat shape, with a heavier spout. They are perhaps equally artistic as far as their shape is concerned, but they are made of sheet brass hammered into shape and afterward filed and polished. They never show the luster of the Damascus product.

Cooking pots and kettles are also made by the coppersmiths and some of those for the use of the sheikhs are of enormous size. Two whole sheep can be cooked at once in the larger ones. Most of these utensils, however, are made for the common householder and are of a very moderate size. Copper transmits heat well and is easily worked. Iron, probably because it is much more difficult to work, has never come into common use for this purpose in Arabia. During the war it was almost impossible to get sheet brass and copper and the lack was very keenly felt. Of late, aluminum vessels have been introduced, and although they seem less durable than the copper ones for hard wear, their cleanliness and convenient shapes have made them popular with the townspeople.

Among the artisans of the oasis are also the blacksmiths, or ironworkers, who make the nails that are used in ship-building on the coast, and in house-building in the interior. These nails are laboriously hammered out of iron rods imported from Bombay. They are expensive, but for ships, at least, they are indispensable, as they resist the action of the salt water far better than imported nails. There are also a few woodworkers who manufacture furniture for the houses: settees, water stands for the water jars, camel saddles and the like. These carpenters, as they might be called, have nothing to do with





OASIS SCENES (3)

house-building, for no house in Arabia is built of wood. The utmost that the carpenter does is to help finish its interior and provide the doors and windows.

All of these artisans seem to enjoy a moderately satisfactory income. Their food is sufficient, and their houses are good shelter from the cold, the heat and the rain. They have adequate clothes. The artisan class as a whole appears to have about the same standards of life as the date cultivators. This is to be expected, of course, for the cultivators are the dominant class, and a scale of wages greatly below theirs would simply drive men to leave their trade and take up the better paid work of the gardens.

In all of these oases there are enterprising merchants who buy from the Bedouin the few things he has to sell, some sheep, a little clarified butter, some wool and a few hides. To these may be added in a good season large quantities of roasted locusts and a small amount of the hard dry cheese made from camel's milk, *"yaghourt,"* as they call it. The bazaar of an Arab town is a busy and colorful place. The merchant, on his part, sells to the Bedouin the commodities he is able to buy, a small amount of foreign cloth, some kerosene oil, probably from America, some gaudy trinkets for personal adornment, perhaps even a lantern. Besides there are products of local manufacture, the work of the various artisans, and, most important of all, dates for every one who has money to buy. There is rice from India, too, and wheat from Persia, but these are for persons of affluence, such as sheikhs and their retainers. There are even books, most of them religious, for any who wish to buy such things, but few or none of them are bought by the Bedouins. Perfumers' shops are to be found in every bazaar of any considerable

size, and the concentrated oily essences that the Arab is so fond of, are one of the staples of the place. The western visitor regards with a feeling akin to terror the little glass phial which his host brings around at the end of a visit. It is distinctly bad manners not to accept the graciously offered honor and smear the hair, moustache and beard, as well as the clothes, with this powerful perfume. For the next twenty-four hours an aureole of fragrance hangs about one, which it may take many ablutions to remove.

Many of the smaller merchants of the bazaar are really nothing but agents for individuals who have something or other to sell. A surprising percentage of the trade of an Arabian bazaar is carried on by these hawkers. They belong to the laboring rather than to the merchant class; and their hours are long and their reward small. Besides all these, there are a certain number of common laborers, who carry burdens in the bazaar and work at digging ditches or at any other unskilled labor which offers itself.

The only representatives of what we know as the professional classes are the various religious teachers. These men are frequently trained in Mohammedan religious schools for many years before assuming their official duties. They are mosque preachers and act as instructors in matters of religion. The more prominent ones will have religious schools for the instruction of boys who look forward to religious careers. Their principal function, however, is one that we would regard as political. They are arbiters in the disputes and small lawsuits that arise between citizens, and as such enjoy positions of great influence. There is no place in Mohammedanism for the exercise of what we understand as the functions

of a spiritual guide or pastor, much less for the functions of a priest.

There is a small group of land-owners and merchants (the same individual is frequently both), who constitute a wealthy upper class which has great power in the community. They form a sort of unofficial cabinet to advise the ruler, and not a great deal happens without their knowledge and approval. However, they are not sheikhs, and sometimes when a powerful governor presides over a community, this rich men's cabinet exercises surprisingly little influence over him. The ruler and his family form what might be termed a class by themselves. Frequently they are strangers more or less directly derived from some Bedouin tribe and far less traveled and sophisticated than many of their rich subjects. They are, however, none the less effective rulers for that. But the whole subject of the workings of Arab government is one that we must reserve for a later chapter.

Desert and oasis in Arabia represent two conflicting modes of life and there is little sympathy between them. To the Bedouin the town is a community of masters and slaves with the vast majority slaves. The date gardener works long and hard; moreover he works under another man's direction, and this director of his efforts receives the major part of the proceeds. The artisan, to be sure, is not the slave of any one individual, but he too is cooped up in narrow quarters, and the necessities of his family keep him busy from morning till night working with his hands. Land-owners and merchants the Bedouin envies, but he still pities them their cramped life and close confinement in the town. Why any one who is rich enough to afford a home in the desert should prefer to live in the oasis, is to him an insoluble mystery.

But if the Bedouin has a great contempt for the townsman, the townsman on his part reciprocates most cordially. He regards the unwashed and unkempt nomad of the desert as little better than a wild beast. Incidentally he fears the wild religious fanaticism of the despised tribesmen exceedingly, and not without reason. "Infidel," said one of the Bedouins to a small shopkeeper in Hasa who sat comfortably smoking his big waterpipe in the door of his shop. "Infidel, shall I break it over your head, or smash it here on the ground?" and the shopkeeper having indicated a preference for the ground, the fanatical Wahabi, to whom tobacco is the very essence of sin and uncleanness, smashed the waterpipe to pieces on the floor. A waterpipe is a quite expensive affair, being an ornamented glass jar of about a quart capacity. Those accustomed to their use insist that in no other way can tobacco be properly smoked. The time was when the inhabitants of the oasis towns were more religious than the Bedouins, but that time is past, and now the Bedouin in his religious zeal looks on them as next to infidels. "Those are the men," the city dweller will explain with great scorn, "who think they are competent to instruct us in matters of religion. They do not know the simplest prayers. Their heads are so full of lice that room could scarcely be found for more. Their clothes never get washed. Their women go about unveiled. They are nothing but wild animals."

The underlying changes that have brought about this transformation from desert conditions to those of the oasis are two. There is a divison of labor, and a certain differentiation into sections and cliques is inevitable on account of that, but a far more significant thing is the fact that agricultural land in the oasis is held as private prop-





OASIS INDUSTRIES

erty, whereas in the desert land is free as the air. Even the function and wealth of the merchant as compared with the gardener and the artisan would lead to comparatively little splitting into economic strata if it were not for the private ownership of land, which produces, as nothing else in Arabia does, the feeling of haughty superiority and cringing subservience. The Bedouin in the desert faces his sheikh with little or no feeling of inferiority, for all that the sheikh has the power of life and death over him. The poorest Bedouin knows that associated with a few others of like mind, he has the same power over the sheikh. The oppressed gardener, however, certainly does not face his land-owner with any feeling of equality. He is compelled to beg on his knees, figuratively speaking, for a chance to live, and it is impossible to escape the conviction that something inexpressibly valuable is lost in the process.

There is no such sense of unfettered freedom in the towns as prevails in the desert. Men work under direction and under a certain restraint. Their hours and their outlook are governed largely by the men they work for. The date cultivator looks up to the man who owns his land. He in turn looks down on any man who works for him. The atmosphere of democracy where each man looks his brother in the eye without flinching, on the even level of entire equality, has disappeared. The unity of the community is gone. The date gardener would not think of intruding in the reception room of the rich man who owns his garden. He is at liberty to see him on business, but not as a social equal.

On the other hand, there are compensations. By any possible standard, life in the oasis is much more civilized and refined than in the desert. The comfort of the people

is greater. The gardener may consider himself hard worked and poorly rewarded. Both of these statements are true. The terms of his agreement with the man who owns the garden are oppressive. He knows very well that his labor is making the land-owner rich while he remains poor. Nevertheless, his lot is vastly more comfortable and he is much more of a polished gentleman than the Bedouin. His wife at least does not wash her hair in camel's urine. The community as a whole, including the artisans and gardeners, has sufficient food and adequate clothes. Compared with desert conditions, people keep clean. Whether built of stone or of mud bricks or of date beams and date leaves, their houses are good shelter from the weather, are warm in winter and fairly cool in summer. On holidays it is refreshing to see how gaily attired they all are. The poorest have a large amount of leisure and can visit their friends and enjoy a pleasant social life.

This society is confined to members of their own class, but within those limits it is quite as fine and unconstrained and free as that of the Bedouin. Indeed, in some ways there is a spontaneity and a good fellowship and a genuine brotherhood that go far beyond anything that the Bedouin knows. The Bedouin is an individualist, and in his home he is seen at his best. His association with friends outside of his own tent, even though they are members of his tribe, is marked by a grave taciturnity that is far removed from the spirit shown when the silversmiths of Hasa have a social evening together or when the date gardeners of Katif entertain a stranger.

Furthermore, in these oasis towns there are the beginnings of Arabic art. Arabic penmanship, when done by a master, is real art, and the expert Arab penman is prob-

ably the most highly developed artist that the place affords. Many of the artisans, too, put into their work the true spirit of the artist. The Hasa coffee pots with their decorations, the fine products of the gold and silver workers, especially their wedding ornaments for women, and the embroidery that decorates both men's and women's clothing often display real art.

More important, there is a considerable diffusion of education in the oasis, principally among its upper classes, but to no small degree even among the lowest. Ibn Saoud boasts that in the towns of inland Arabia over two-thirds of the men can at least read the Koran, and many of them can write as well. His system of government-paid education is extensive and is a great credit to him. A certain number of Arabic newspapers are read. These come from Egypt and Constantinople and Baghdad. Most important of all, surprising numbers of these townsmen have traveled, and the travelers come from all classes. Some have gone as merchants, some as servants; some have shipped as sailors from the coast towns, or indeed as stokers in the steamers of the "Ingleez." I met a man in Hasa who had been all over the world as a member of an acrobatic troupe. He had visited nearly every large capital in Europe and some of the large cities of America. It is true that many very astonishing and crude ideas are met in these places, but these travelers are at least past the stage where the world is flat. One of them was told something about a new telescope recently built—how it was hoped among other things to discover many new facts about the moon by its means. "Oh yes," was the reply. "I was reading about that in the newspaper myself. With this new instrument they were able to see that the moon was in-

habited. They saw a garden and out of it a man came with something under his arm, but it was impossible to be certain whether it was a watermelon or a muskmelon."

The Westerner feels quite at home as he observes the material elements of life in an oasis. In social organization and economic thought the resemblance to the West is very close. The surprising thing is their extraordinary religious development. No more religious communities are to be found anywhere in the world. Religion is not a matter for religious leaders; it is rather the primary concern of the entire community. The next world is something inexpressibly important in the minds of these people, and as far as can be judged, all classes share in this feeling.

In the oases near the coast where the present world is a more comfortable place than in the desert of inland Arabia, there is less of this emphasis on the next world. Most of the religious leaders of the Bedouins live in these towns and in that sense they are religious centers of Arabia, but the rank and file of the oasis inhabitants give much of their attention to matters that are of the earth earthy. The religion of the date gardener who lives in such an oasis is not nearly so strong philosophically as the Bedouin's and it has much more superstition, for he is almost without exception a Shiah rather than an orthodox Sunni whenever the choice has been offered him. He is, however, much more tolerant than the Sunni Bedouin and far more willing that men of different convictions shall be his neighbors. He does not want to eat with infidels, but on the other hand he has not the slightest desire to kill them, nor even to drive them away from the village. As far as he is concerned, a Jew may live in





OASIS DWELLERS

his town if he is a respectable citizen and especially if he fulfills any useful function in the place. He is glad to have an infidel Christian doctor come and set up a hospital. The fact that this doctor represents a different religion does not cause him a moment's worry.

On the other hand, the intolerance of some of these oasis communities, especially among the Sunnis of inland Arabia, is tremendous. A member of the Shiah sect may be permitted to reside in northern Arabia, but in the Wahabi district of Riyadh, Shiahs are looked on with great hostility. The presence of a Christian is a contamination, and that of a Jew is intolerable. These fanatics regard all the rest of the world with a lofty and scornful pity as miserable infidels and look forward with delight to the day when all such will roast in Hell. Mohammed came from such a community, and it was his picture of God's omnipotence and the infinite superiority of believers over the wretched infidels who comprise the rest of the world that has given Mohammedanism such success in three continents.

Aside from this intolerance, every element necessary to progress seems to be present in these Arab communities. There is certainly no lack of a keen intelligence in studying and interpreting the world's affairs. There is no lack of loyalty in following a trusted leader. The beginnings of art and its appreciation by the people as a whole look most encouraging. There has been a most commendable diffusion of education; it is true that up till now it has been of a very provincial sort, but discounted to the utmost, no one can deny that a male literacy of seventy-five per cent is a great achievement. It is impossible for any one to become acquainted with Arab life in

desert and town without coming to a puzzled inquiry as to the cause for its continued stagnation. What is it that holds the Arabs back?

The answer lies upon the surface of Arab society. It is so obvious, indeed, that it usually escapes notice, or rather it is only after considerable observation that one comes to realize its effects and implications. To a new arrival from America the most surprising difference between the society he has left and the new society he now enters, is in the relation of the sexes. All animal appetites are strongly developed in the Arab, but nowhere has the development been so unbalanced and harmful as in the appetites and passions which are connected with sex. These appetites are perhaps as intensely developed in the Arab as in any race in the world. Certainly they are far more intense than in Europe and America. The Arab knows three pleasures, perfumes to smell, food to eat and women to enjoy. In ten years' medical work in Arabia, I have yet to interview the first Arab in search of a tonic because his business cares or any other of life's ordinary activities were proving too much for his strength. Hundreds have come to ask for some elixir to prolong and increase the physical pleasures of parenthood. The customs that the Arab's appetite has created allow him four wives and as many concubines as he desires. He may divorce any wife at his pleasure and sell any concubine. Thus he may change partners at will and contract a new alliance at any time the fancy strikes him—whenever, in fact, he finds his first partners getting a trifle old or otherwise unattractive, quite commonly after they have borne children and have therefore less to offer in the way of sex gratification. The result can be imagined. The pleasures licensed and endorsed by such a public opinion come

to dominate the whole emotional horizon. Perhaps ninety per cent of the conscious enjoyment of the Arab comes to reside in this particular experience.

We might expect to see especial care spent on children in such a country, and all life centering around them. If the forces of religion had been exerted to this end, perhaps that is what we should see, but as a matter of fact, religion has surrendered to custom and desire and the far easier path has been followed which leads to the focusing of all attention on physical sex indulgence, with children a mere necessary encumbrance. The world of the Arab does not revolve about the children. They are a mere incident, although they are petted and spoiled. What he delights in is the physical enjoyment of a new and pretty wife.

Fortunately there are natural limits to this indulgence. The number of women in Arabia is not greatly in excess of the number of men, and obviously the percentage of men who can have four wives is a small one. Arabs universally have an abnormally developed sex appetite, and their whole emotional life revolves around it, but not all have surrendered equally to this type of excess. Polygamy is almost unknown among the nomad Bedouins of the desert and divorce is uncommon. The poorer classes in the oases and in the coast towns share to some extent in the immunity of the Bedouin. None of them, however, show as fine a family life as his and for a very simple reason. They are not so poor, and the evil example of the rich is closer at hand to corrupt their minds and desires, even if because of their poverty it cannot corrupt their practices.

Among the wealthy the system is carried out to its limits. Some of the oasis chiefs are among the worst

offenders. I know one or two of them who are reputed to average a new wife every month. The merchants of the oases and the coast towns are nearly as bad. It goes without saying that only the rich and the great can indulge themselves to this extent, for it takes a good deal of money to change wives in such a fashion. However, it also goes without saying that any society whose ideals and religious teachings include and endorse a system such as this, and whose promised abode of future bliss is nothing but an exaggeration of the same thing, will show much the same moral tone all the way down to the very lowest strata.

CHAPTER IV

PEARL DIVERS OF THE EAST COAST

ALONG the East Coast of Arabia are located the largest pearl fisheries in the world. Pearl fishing has been the occupation of that part of Arabia for many centuries. Probably a hundred thousand Arabs are engaged in this hard and dangerous work throughout the summer months. Half a million people must depend on these divers for their livelihood. This is not a large percentage of the inhabitants of Arabia, but the pearl divers are worthy of consideration, for the outside world has come into closer contact with them than with any other Arab community in the entire peninsula. As might be expected, the coast cities contain artisans, laborers, a few date gardeners, and merchants. These differ in no significant way from similar classes elsewhere. The pearl diving community is unique.

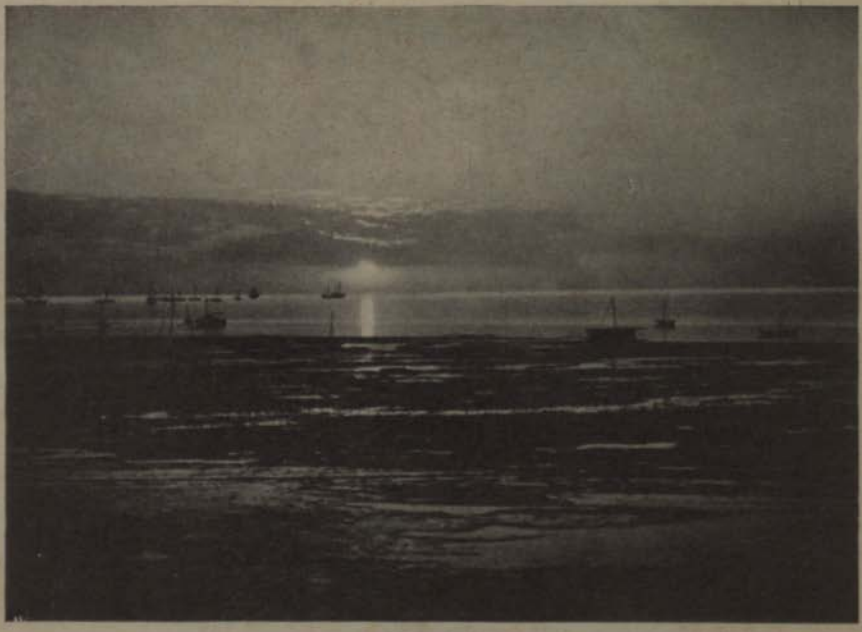
Nothing can exceed the barrenness of the coast where these men live. From Kuwait in the north to Ras el Kheima in the south, a distance of three hundred miles, scarcely a green thing is to be seen, except for a few miles of date gardens at Katif and a smaller number at Dibai. The water available for drinking is brackish and almost undrinkable in many places. The inhabitants of Umm el Qaiwain, one of these towns, "drink mud," to quote the Arabs. The coast is so utterly unproductive that all food must be imported, and in some places even the fuel and drinking water.

All the cities along this coast north of Ras el Kheima are diving communities, and some of them are quite large. Kuwait, the largest, has about fifty thousand inhabitants. Kuwait has good harbor facilities, and the government of the city has been notably efficient and strong-handed for many years. A pearl diver may as well live in one coast town as another, and so Kuwait has grown to be a large city. The drinking water for this entire city is brought in specially constructed sailing vessels from the mouth of the Arab River in Mesopotamia sixty miles away. The divers live on rice that is brought them from India, on wheat that comes from Persia, and on sheep from inland Persia and Arabia. The only local product is fish. The physical surroundings of all these towns are very similar to those of Kuwait. The landscape is an unbroken and monotonous expanse of sand on one side and sea on the other. The heat in summer is extreme and the air is practically always moist, so that for three or four months in the summer the climate is almost unbearable.

In the spring the diving community begins to hum with activity. The boats are cleaned up and repaired. New masts are put in and new rigging provided. As the time for diving approaches, supplies of food and water are taken on board. The divers collect from far and near. Most of the population are divers, and in addition many more come from a distance to dive for the season. There are men from every district in Arabia and from all over Mesopotamia; a few come even from the various provinces of Persia. The place is filled with festivities and good fellowship and hopes for a successful season.

The day for embarkation finally comes. The boats are fitted with enormous sails, and also with a full com-





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plement of long heavy oars, so that they can be independent of the wind when necessary. One of these great diving boats moving out to sea is a sight long to be remembered. I once watched one of the largest Dibai boats leave for the pearl banks. During the winter these boats are hauled up on the sand within a lagoon that runs through the city. The great boat moved majestically down this lagoon and out to sea. There were fifteen to twenty enormous oars on each side and each oar was manned by two divers. The oarsmen swung down the lagoon with a stateliness that I have never seen surpassed, the men chanting as they worked, *"A billah mal, a billah mal,"* in a rhythm that had all the swing of a regiment off to war or a football team on its way to a game. There was a splendid silk flag flying at the stern, and the great ship went out to sea with every small boy in Dibai wishing he was on board. I felt the thrill of it myself, and the Baluch boy that I had with me as a medical assistant had hard work to keep both his feet on the ground. "Oh *Sahib,*" he said, "it makes me want to go with them."

However, once the pearl banks are reached, the work is hard and dangerous. The long oars are fastened in place so that they stretch out horizontally over the water and to each oar a rope is tied which carries a lead weight or a stone on its end. The diver stands on this weight as he descends, in order to get down quickly. Each diver has an assistant whose duty it is to haul up the weight as soon as the diver reaches the bottom, so that it may be ready for the next descent. There is a second rope which is fastened around the diver's waist. By this his assistant pulls him up when he gives the signal. This assistance is not necessary if the diving is in shallow

water up to twenty feet, but when the depth is greater, as from fifty to seventy-five or even occasionally ninety feet, the help of the assistant is indispensable.

The diver puts something that looks much like a clothespin on his nose, takes a long breath and descends. He can stay under about two minutes, and in that time he walks around on the bottom picking up the oyster shells that he finds there and filling a small basket, which hangs by a cord around his neck. This basket is about the size of the crown of a hat. His forefinger is protected by a heavy fingercot, for often it is not easy to dislodge the oyster from its bed. When the little basket is filled, or as soon as he has been down for about two minutes, the diver gives his assistant a signal and is pulled to the surface. The shells are emptied on to the deck, the man rests a short time, and goes down again. This work is kept up with little or no intermission until sunset. Nothing is eaten in the morning, and nothing throughout the entire day. The Arabs say that it is impossible to dive except on an empty stomach, and the men take nothing except a little coffee perhaps, and on occasions a date or two. At sundown they have prayers, and after that come a substantial meal and time to sleep.

The diving has resulted in a pile of oyster shells, which is large or small depending on the day's success. The following morning the first item on the program is opening these shells and finding any pearls that they contain. The men sit in two rows, a row on each side of the little ship, and a small pile of shells is placed in front of each diver. They squat cross-legged, encumbered with little clothing, and the captain sits high up astern where all of the men will be under his eye as they work. The shells are opened with a thin flat knife, and the diver very

deftly searches in all the different places where experience has taught him to look for the small glistening things that bring such a high price in the world's market. It is almost impossible for any one to conceal a pearl as he works. He has scarcely enough clothing for such a purpose, and the watchful eye of the captain is hardly off him for a minute. When a pearl is found, if it is small, as most of them are, it is wiped off on to the big toe or the thumb of the diver. As the work progresses, some of the men will have quite a row of little pearls extending perhaps the whole length of their big toe, to which they adhere because they are damp. As soon as the number of these little pearls is sufficient or a really large pearl is found, everything is taken to the captain, who carefully puts all the pearls in a little bag made of red flannel and keeps them safe. When this work is completed, the diving of the day begins. The delay caused by the search for pearls in the catch of the previous day is not usually more than from half an hour to an hour.

The skill required for the labor is small, and outsiders have little difficulty in qualifying as divers even with no previous experience. Stories are told of Bedouins from the desert, who have never learned to swim, starting nonchalantly to dive with the more experienced men. Men of this sort usually get along all right. Occasionally they drown. Boys sometimes start out even at the age of ten to work as cooks and minor helpers, receiving at first a small fixed wage. Later they are promoted to the position of assistants and soon are divers if they so desire. The work, although it calls for little skill, does require much courage and nerve, and to be a really successful diver a good degree of aptitude and energy is essential. The energetic diver who has at the same time a con-

tagiously cheerful spirit is prized highly and receives extra good treatment. The season's success, however, turns only partially on the energy and skill of the men. The fluctuations of the market are pure chance as far as the men are concerned, and the success of the catch is an equally incalculable factor. The weather has also to be considered, for in storms it is impossible to dive, and the "forty-day northwest wind," so called, is likely to take a large number of days out of the working calendar.

The pearl banks stretch for miles and miles in the shallow waters of the Persian Gulf. Occasionally pearl-bearing oysters may be found where the water is so shallow that the very low tides of the first and middle of each lunar month leave the bottom of the sea quite uncovered. However, most of the diving is done in water that is at least four fathoms or twenty-four feet deep. Deeper than fifteen fathoms, that is to say ninety feet, no one dives, and the Arabs insist that at greater depth no pearl-bearing oysters are found. Any rocky bottom between these two limits of depths is suitable territory in which to hunt for pearls. Certain banks are noted as affording good hunting, but most of the season's fishing partakes largely of the nature of exploration and guesswork, trying here and trying there in localities where the catch is reported as good. The number of diving boats at work is large, but the territory available is vast and there is no crowding. The banks are scattered along the Arabian coast of the Persian Gulf for perhaps three hundred miles, so the opportunity for each boat is ample.

These banks are as free as the air. No one exercises any control over them, nor claims the privilege of charging rent for their use. The nominal tax of a diver's share

taken from each Kuwait boat by the Sheikh of that city is simply a tax collected from his citizens. The Bahrein Sheikh collects a small fixed charge from each boat, the amount depending upon the number of men it carries. The Persian Gulf is a British lake as far as police service is concerned, and the British administrators with their usual common sense and practical benevolence have forbidden the introduction of diving bells and dredges. As a result, the banks are worked solely by native boats. By the use of machinery and dredges, diving bells, and the like, undoubtedly the banks could be cleaned out in a few years with large profits to a few individuals, but it would mean the destruction of the whole diving community. The divers have much for which to thank Great Britain, although they do not realize it, much less appreciate it.

About five months are spent in the actual work of diving. Every three weeks or so the boat returns to the most convenient harbor to take on fresh water and food and to have the boat's bottom scraped. With these short intermissions the work is continuous throughout the entire season. The work is officially closed by order of the local sheikh on a certain day, so that the greedy captains cannot keep their men diving in water too cold to be safe. The captain then takes the season's catch to some pearl merchant, and sells it for whatever the market affords.

Not only are the pearl banks a free preserve maintained by the British for the Arab divers, but the markets where the pearls are sold are equally free. The Oriental is particularly unscrupulous in manipulating markets, and in India it sometimes happens that in spite of all the government can do, or at least in spite of all it feels at liberty to do, corners in food stuffs are engineered with sufficient success to bring much profit to the dealers and much suf-

fering to the common people. Nothing of that sort has ever happened in the pearl market. French dealers from Paris maintain an establishment throughout the year in Bombay where any man may come to sell his pearls. These men speak Arabic fluently and they buy the pearls in person. For about three months of the active season they send up one of the partners of the firm to act as purchaser in Bahrein itself, so that the Paris market is practically available to the poorest merchant and diver in Bahrein. It is a pleasure to testify to the fine character and courteous business-like dealings of these buyers. If Arabia's contact with the West could be confined to men of their type, her path would have fewer thorns and stones. A host of smaller Arab and Indian buyers pick up a certain percentage of the catch and handle it, partly with an eye to legitimate business and partly as a speculative venture. There is always a large amount of speculation in Bahrein and Bombay in connection with the fluctuations in the value of the pearls. Like every other sort of speculation, it carries with it a great temptation, and many are fascinated by the prospect of buying cheap and selling high. They often work with large sums borrowed from others and end with a crash, completely bankrupt. Fluctuations in the pearl market are very wide; pearls worth a thousand *rupees* this season may be worth double that or half of it the following season. Indeed on rare occasions they may drop to one-half their value overnight. Almost every one gets the fever for speculation during the season. I remember seeing an old slave bring to a pearl dealer a few small and misshapen pearls. "I bought these," he said, "for eight *annas* (sixteen cents); I am hoping to sell them for twelve *annas*."

From the proceeds of the season's catch one-fifth is turned over to the owner of the boat as rent for its use, and from the remainder the season's expenses for food, water and the like are deducted. The money that is left represents the profits of the season. Each diver receives an equal share of this; each assistant two-thirds of a share. The captain, who has done no diving but has superintended the season's campaign, receives a diver's share, as does the sheikh of the town in some instances, this being the government tax upon the industry.

This seems a good system. In theory it could hardly be improved, but in practice it could hardly be worse. The divers cannot read or write, so they have no way of knowing whether or not their accounts are correctly kept. They may not assist in, or even witness, the process of sale, so they have not the slightest control over the captain, nor any means of protecting themselves from dishonesty on his part. The captain himself is between the upper and nether millstones, for the only way he can rent a diving boat is by promising to sell his pearls to the owner of that boat, and from this owner he may receive not over fifty per cent of their market price. Even this reduced price the divers do not receive undiminished, for the captain enriches himself privately at their expense before the sale is reported. Then as if matters were not bad enough, almost without exception the men are in their captain's debt, and remain so throughout their lives.

The fact that nearly all the divers are in debt is partly their own fault. When a man begins to dive, he could avoid borrowing money if he were at all determined to do so. The diving season lasts only five months at the outside, and the season's proceeds may be sufficient to live on for the whole year with economy and care. If they

are not, work can be found to tide over the winter months. That, however, is not the usual course of events. The boy who has five hundred *rupees* in his pocket for the first time in his life is eager to have a good time. Inside of a month or two all the money is gone. The captain encourages this procedure, and assures the boy that he will gladly lend him any amount desired. The one thing that the captain desires is to lend this new diver some money, and his zeal to make himself accommodating and friendly is sometimes quite ludicrous. With most of his new men, unfortunately, there is little difficulty. The season's proceeds are gone inside of a few weeks, and before the winter is over, the diver is in debt for an amount equal to the sum he earned, or quite possibly even greater.

The diver is now a slave for the rest of his life. It is probably easier for a negro slave on the Pirate Coast to escape than it is for a Bahrein diver to regain his freedom. As long as he is in debt he cannot change his employer, no matter how badly he is treated, nor can he leave the town except under bonds to return before the diving season begins. And he never will be able to get out of debt. He cannot read or write. There is no witness to the transactions that take place between the captain and himself. It is the recognized thing for divers to receive a loan of rice when the season begins, so that their families may have something to eat while the head of the house is away. The sum written into the books is regularly about fifty per cent greater than the market price of the rice. If necessary, entirely false entries are written in. The upshot of the matter is that these men never get out of debt, not one in a thousand of them. In seven years' residence in Bahrein, I have never yet met a diver

who had "escaped from the account book," as the Arabs put it.

The amount that a season's work brings in is now a matter of indifference. However great it may be, all that happens is that the sum is written to the diver's credit on the books, and he is given an advance when he asks for it and the captain is willing to allow it. There are certain times during the year when it is the custom to give these advances—the beginning and the close of the diving season and once or twice during the idle months. A good season means somewhat more liberal advances and a bad season smaller ones. The diver, however, is absolutely at the captain's mercy in all this. As a matter of fact he gets in ordinary years an amount that is sufficient for life, and a more comfortable life than that of the Bedouin. The diver's standards of life, however, are considerably below those of a date gardener in a good oasis. It is to the captain's interest, of course, to have his men more or less well fed and satisfied, and to have the glamour of pearl diving maintained so that others will be attracted to the work, so a great show is made of calculating the season's receipts and the rare man who is not in debt really does get a fairly liberal reward for the season's exhausting labor. The crucial point, of course, is the law that prevents a mistreated and dissatisfied diver from changing his employer or from changing his residence. The captain could afford to give his men an amount that would allow them a considerably better mode of life. Doubtless if public sentiment becomes too threatening, he will do so. The thing he will not do is to consent to any alteration of the law that at present delivers the debtor into his hands,

body and soul. The one redeeming feature of the system is that debts are not transmissible from father to son and theoretically each boy starts out with a clean slate, but too often the filial loyalty of the son is appealed to and he assumes his father's debts. This plan allows the old man to retire from his life of hardship. Nothing suits the captain better, for thus the boy is deprived of his only chance to keep free from the slavery that has bound his father.

But in spite of its financial drawbacks the work has a great fascination for the Arab, and this is largely because of its element of chance. The Oriental is an inveterate gambler, and the Arab is no exception. Some years the reward of an individual diver may be next to nothing. Another season he may make a thousand *rupees,* or about three hundred and fifty dollars. Over night the whole aspect of the season may change. A pearl worth fifty thousand *rupees* may be discovered at any time. The largest pearl sold locally during the past ten years brought one hundred and twenty thousand *rupees.* Arabs tell of boats whose divers have cleared over two thousand *rupees* or more in a season, but such mythical individuals are hard to find. It is far easier to find the man who has failed to make two *rupees.* However, to do the industry justice, such individuals are rare also. In fair seasons the average must lie somewhere between three hundred and seven hundred *rupees,* or one hundred to two hundred and fifty dollars.

At the end of the season the profit, such as it is, is reported and the money divided. The divers each receive their share, and the assistants each two-thirds of a share. Men in debt receive a more or less liberal allowance, and the town is filled with rejoicing divers who have just re-

turned from four months or more of exhausting work, during which time they have been half starved and have had no opportunity of finding enjoyment and pleasure, legitimate or otherwise. The result is precisely what might be expected. Persian rugs in the bazaar go up to twice their proper price as does anything else that the divers may fancy. Meat reaches the highest price of the year, and the same is true of fish, which food the divers enjoy above everything else. Gambling is all but universal. Immorality flourishes. This state of affairs lasts a month, perhaps two months. Then things gradually settle down into the regular winter stagnation until the next diving season.

The same thing happens on a smaller scale when the season opens. Advances are made to the men. Feasts are held. There is much good fellowship and coöperation as the preparations for the season are completed. The chanting of singers can be heard late into the night. The money advanced by the captains makes a great show as it is spent. Strangers come in from far and near to go out and dive with the local men, and the city wears such a gala appearance as it scarcely puts on again till the next season.

It is thus that an astonishingly attractive tinsel surface is maintained over an industry and a manner of life that even for Arabia are bitterly sordid and exhausting. The pearl diver's life is one of poverty, hard and cruel. In a bad season it is with difficulty that he gets enough to eat. His lot is distinctly worse than that of the date cultivator. Diving wrecks the health as no other Arabian occupation wrecks it. The high pressure of the water at great depths frequently bursts the ear drums, and it is a safe conjecture that no community of equal size anywhere can show

such a number of chronic running ears. The lungs are often affected, and all along the diving coast pulmonary tuberculosis is common. This is not remarkable when we know that in the opening days of the season the men frequently dive in water that is so cold that they spit blood. Many return from their summer of semi-starvation and unsuitable diet of rice and dates with their gums sore and bleeding from scurvy.

Living conditions in the community are what might be expected. Disease is common. The death rate is high. Poverty is universal. In good years the standard of life is none too high. In bad years it is reduced almost to the starvation point. During a hard year the food of the divers is poor in quality and scanty in amount almost to the degree of partial starvation. They usually live in date-stick huts, and in the winter must frequently shiver in unwarmed houses because they have no money for fuel.

In such communities there is little or no interest in education. A diver has reason enough, one might suppose, for wanting to know how to read and write and keep his own accounts, but it is rare that one of them knows as much as that, and apparently it is equally unusual to find one who is trying to educate his children so that they may escape the slavery that binds him. The boys are frequently taken out to learn pearl diving while they are still under twelve. In Bahrein the American Mission has tried for many years to develop educational work of an elementary sort, but has found it practically impossible because there is no demand for such things. The considerable Persian community in the city has made efforts from time to time to establish educational work for its own boys. The Persian schools exist for a little





A PEARL DIVER AND HIS HOUSE

time and then break up and disappear. Few care whether they live or die. One of the Bahrein sheikhs made a visit to England at the invitation of the British Government about three years ago. On his return he collected nearly a hundred thousand dollars for the founding of a free public school. A large building was projected, but by inefficiency and carelessness, if not worse, the entire sum was spent on the first story of that building. Now the project languishes and seems about to die, purely because nobody cares whether it lives or not. Even Koran schools are few in number and poor in quality. There is nothing like the diffusion of education that prevails in the inland desert towns.

Although the vast majority of the people in these towns are pearl divers, there are a few fishermen and a smaller number who gain a precarious livelihood as sailors in Arab sailing ships. There are abundant supplies of fish in all these harbors, but fishing is a very unpopular occupation. It is hard, disagreeable work, and the men must frequently be out in the little boats all night. When times are good and the captain's allowances liberal, nobody is willing to fish. When the pearl catch is bad or the price low every one feels poor, many eke out their small resources by this additional work, and fish becomes plentiful and cheap.

There were once many sea-going sail boats engaged in carrying various cargoes from port to port in this district, for the Arabs are bold navigators and can travel in these ships from India to the Suez Canal. They still bring goods from the various East African ports to Arabia, and rarely fail to make these long trips successfully, but the work is hard, and since the steamers of the "Ingleez" have absorbed more and more of the better

trade, the profits of a sailing boat have diminished and the percentage of the population that supports itself this way is very small.

However, since all the food and clothing of the community must be imported, and in places even the water and building material, trade in the Persian Gulf reaches large proportions. Rice is imported by hundreds of thousands of sacks each year. A special steamer of the Standard Oil Company brings kerosene oil from New York. There is a large importation of the stronger and cheaper grades of foreign cloth. The rice and kerosene and the various imports from India, such as dishes and lanterns and all sorts of gaudy trinkets, are brought in steamers. The British India Steamship Company has a line of coasting steamers which call every week at the larger Gulf ports. Some food materials are brought from Mesopotamia and from Persia, and these smaller importations from near-by ports are often brought in sail boats. All of these imports are paid for indirectly with pearls. The last season before the Great War the value of the pearls marketed in Bahrein was estimated at three *crores* or about $9,000,000.

There are no merchants in the whole peninsula that are so rich as the pearl merchants of the East Coast. There are a few of these merchants that could rank as millionaires if their fortunes were measured in American money. These men are more or less educated and have traveled extensively. Many of them take newspapers and read modern books. Their establishments are places of great luxury and comfort, with many of the outward signs of modern civilization. Their houses and offices may be lit by electric lights, and their taste extends even to motor launches and automobiles. The larger ports of

Kuwait, Bahrein and Dibai have also a large community of artisans and lesser merchants. These serve not simply the local diving population, but also act as manufacturers and wholesalers for the whole of Central Arabia. Practically the entire import and export trade for the interior of the peninsula goes through these three towns, and the merchant and artisan communities are large and prosperous.

It is difficult to be optimistic about the general situation in these pearl-diving communities. The actual material condition of the divers is bad enough, but worse by far is the discouragement and despair that have settled down upon the whole community. No one tries very hard to get out of debt, for he knows that barring some unforeseen miracle, he cannot do so no matter how long and hard he works and how economically he lives. There is little thrift; a stranger is often shocked by the waste that divers show in their personal and household expenditures. There is not the slightest effort, for instance, to discover what sort of clothing will give the most service for the money invested. Expensive or cheap, economical or wasteful, it is all the same. With luck when the present supply of money is gone, the captain will make another liberal allowance, and nothing better than that can be hoped for, no matter what economy and thrift are practised.

The conditions outlined above are those that obtain in the northern towns, chiefly in Bahrein. There is a second large diving community in the region known as the Pirate Coast, whose capital and largest city is Dibai. Its piratical character is a matter of history now long past, but it still makes a good deal of trouble for the British who police the Gulf and maintain order along the coast.

Political troubles became acute some ten years ago or more, and for many years no foreigner was allowed to land on that coast. It was a double pleasure, then, to be invited to visit that part of Arabia four years ago. It is the one remaining nest of slavery in eastern Arabia and the district is still troublesome at times to the bearers of constituted authority, but nothing of that sort is apparent to the visiting doctor. The rich and the poor alike are most courteous and pleasant hosts.

In this district the pearl-diving system is the same as in Bahrein, but the men do not work nearly so hard. They set out to work later in the season, although if the temperature of the water were the only element in their decision, they might be at work sooner, for they lie farther to the south and their water warms up considerably before that near Bahrein. They return to the shore oftener and show much less energy in their work. The pearl banks in the region of the Pirate Coast are less rich than the Bahrein banks, and as might be expected, their catch is much less valuable than that of the boats farther north. It is interesting to see that divers on the Pirate Coast live at about the same general level as those in Bahrein. They could not live at a much lower level, for it would mean starvation. The larger receipts in the Bahrein area have as their only result the creation of a much richer class of pearl merchants than the similar class on the Pirate Coast.

Unquestionably it is the slaves who have reduced the standards of what a day's and a season's work ought to be to its present level on the Pirate Coast. Most of these slaves are negroes from Africa. A few are Baluchs from the Makran coast between India and Persia. They do not number over one-half the divers, probably far

less than that, but their attitude of listlessness and indifference has tended to pull all the rest down to their level. Just why slavery never took root in Bahrein, why the Arabs there never bought slaves to do their diving, is difficult to see. It seems such an easy way to get rich. One reason why Bahrein is a much stronger community financially now than its southern competitor is the fact that slaves have never been brought in to any large extent.

It is a great temptation, this opportunity to have one's work done by slaves, and nothing could seem to offer greater profits. The slaves have no rights. They can be punished if they show less diligence than their owner thinks adequate. They receive no wages at all, only such food and clothing as their master sees fit to give them. Arabs are not the only people that have been deceived by this fallacy. We believed it ourselves a hundred years ago. It has been a disastrous policy from every standpoint. Nothing could exceed the indifference and laziness of the average slave under such conditions. The money spent on food and clothing for these slaves brings a smaller return in service rendered than any wages paid in Arabia. Of that much any one is sure who has watched them work, or rather has watched their very successful efforts to avoid doing any work. Prostitution is commoner on that coast than in any other eastern Arabian community. Slave women are the toys of any man who buys them, and what the Pirate Coast sowed in its treatment of helpless women slaves, it is reaping in an atmosphere of degradation that envelops the entire community from the lowest to the highest.

As passive resisters these slaves are superb. I have seen one of them, disgruntled by some mistreatment or insult, simply lie down on the job and no expostulation

or threat seemed to stir him. They are exceedingly superstitious, too, and are frequently visited by a familiar spirit, who takes complete possession of the individual. The Arabs on the Pirate Coast are not especially superstitious. They are Sunni Mohammedans, and that sort of faith does not readily lend itself to superstition. However, when one of these negro slaves starts up as if suddenly crazed, and runs around shouting and gesticulating and talking earnestly in a changed voice as if a new personality had possessed him, even the hard Arab masters are a good deal awed and hesitate to inflict the punishment they had planned. These visitations may come at the most opportune times, and it takes more hardihood than the Arab usually possesses to disregard such a warning. I have had such a slave jump suddenly from the operating table when all preparations were complete and I had the knife in my hand to begin an operation for the removal of a tumor from his neck. The operation was to be done under local anesthesia, so the patient was fully conscious. We were thankful that he did not wait till ten minutes later when the operation would have been well under way. These slaves are not shamming in any ordinary sense. They thoroughly believe in the genuineness of such manifestations. They do not thus escape every whipping, but these visitations undoubtedly do protect them from a certain number of terrible punishments at the hands of their Arab masters.

In these diving communities the actual control even of the civil powers rests in the hands of the diving captains and the pearl merchants. The town of Ras el Kheima has a number of divers who regularly dive in boats the captains of which live in Dibai and Sharja. During one winter war of a small sort broke out between

the Sheikh of Ras el Kheima and some of the inland tribes of that district, and this fighting was pushed quite vigorously, the city being more or less in a state of siege. It was not difficult to hold the port itself against attack, but as the fighting continued, the diving season came on. The merchants of Sharja and Dibai then sent representatives to settle the matter, for their divers were being held in the city for its defense and had not reported for diving. The Sheikh was far from willing to make peace, but eventually the pressure of these men of money was too much for him, and he was compelled to settle with the tribesmen so his subjects could go out and work for the men whose debtors they were.

Conditions in a diving community are not pleasant to see. They seem the more pitiful because they are so unnecessary. Why should not any dozen men who are out of debt, or a dozen beginners, club together, borrow the capital for the season's supplies, or better, save their money for a season or two and then have the capital sufficient for the enterprise? One-half of an ordinary year's profits would probably meet all expenses and another half season's profits would buy the boat that carries the men. The pearl banks are free, the markets are free. It would be easy to purchase supplies at the same price that every one else pays. The proceeds of such a group would be subject to the same element of chance as every pearl diver's but in any case should be at least twice those they receive at present, inasmuch as the captain's and the pearl merchant's extortions would be avoided. Any dozen divers might do it. The skill required is most moderate and the necessary capital within easy reach.

As a matter of fact the experiment is occasionally tried, but I never knew it to last through more than one

season. The men go out and dive in this coöperative way for one summer, but they are back again the next year as parts of the old machine. What drives them back? From a distance it looks like insanity, but any one acquainted with the local conditions knows this result is inevitable. The Arabs simply cannot coöperate to that extent. They cannot trust each other even in such an association. In a community where simple business partnership between two men in the bazaar is almost unknown, it is futile to expect a dozen divers to coöperate successfully in an enterprise like diving, where mutual forbearance and mutual confidence would be essential, and where the catch might be good sometimes but quite certainly would be bad at other times. The road out of the diver's present trouble is obvious enough, but it is not a possible road for the Arab as he is constituted at present. No road could be more impossible. A little coöperation would save him from the exactions of dishonest captains and greedy pearl merchants, but of that coöperation the Arab is incapable. So since he is unable to organize his industry for his own benefit, it is organized for him by others for their interest, and it goes without saying that the organizer exploits the men under him to the utmost limit.

The fundamental difficulty is in the divers themselves. The majority of the divers of Bahrein are Persians, or belong to that semi-Persian community known as the "Baharina." They are cheated and defrauded by their employers to a degree almost beyond belief. Their economic condition is pitiable. Not so the comparatively small number of divers who come in from the desert. The Bedouins who come and dive are never exploited. A captain who attempted to cheat them would lose his

head and he knows it. Therefore these Bedouins, who avoid debt as they would the plague, receive a much better reward for their work than the others. These wild men bow to no authority except that of Allah in Heaven, and are not easy victims. They usually club together and dive in boats by themselves. They keep out of debt, and so have no limitations to their independence. I asked one of them once in a jocose way whether he was sure that the captain was honest in the reports that were submitted as to the prices secured for pearls and the season's proceeds. "Ah," said the diver with the broadest sort of an engaging smile. "What is that you say? Does the captain lie about the price of the pearls he sells for us? No, indeed, he does not lie. He tells the truth. If he should try to cheat us, ha-a." Here the smile extended till it took in his whole face, and he drew the edge of his hand across his own neck in a gesture the meaning of which could not be misunderstood.

The most conspicuous example, however, of divers who are out of debt and therefore out of bondage, is to be found in Katar. Here is a small diving community where practically all of the men are out of debt, and the atmosphere of freedom and equality, good fellowship and comfort is a refreshing contrast to the conditions in Bahrein. The men show real independence and self-respect. These divers can change their employers if the treatment they receive is not satisfactory. They can move to another city to live. In a word, they are free men. Yet the system under which they work is no different from that obtaining in Bahrein. It is the divers who are different. They are Bedouins or descended from Bedouins. They keep out of debt and as a result the system works very well.

I once listened with interest to a merchant from Katar as he gave his opinion of the situation in his own town as compared with that of Bahrein. "I understand," I remarked, "that most of the Katar divers are out of debt."

"Oh," said he, "the divers in Katar where I come from are none of them in debt."

"And their condition," I persisted, "should be somewhat better and more comfortable."

"That requires no discussion; of course they are very much better off if they are out of debt."

"Well now," I asked, "how does it happen that divers in Katar keep out of debt while here in Bahrein almost every diver is heavily in debt to his captain?"

"The trouble is this," replied the merchant, and I thought I could discern in his tone a little envy of the wealthy Bahrein merchants. "We have no powerful ruler in Katar. It is no use to lend a diver money. He will borrow all you are willing to lend and then go to work for some one else in spite of the debt. If at the season's end you try to arrest him or to compel him to pay, he simply leaves the city and returns to his tribe in the desert, and it is impossible to get him back. At least our sheikh does not get them back and recover the money. So the money lent is a complete loss. The merchants will not lend money under such circumstances and so nobody is in debt." And a vision rose up in my own mind of the great free stretches of the desert and the unconquerable men that the desert produces—men who look on property as a light thing and who compel merchants and even sheikhs to bow to their independence of spirit and their contempt for the filthy lucre of this world.

CHAPTER V

THE MOUNTAIN DISTRICT OF OMAN

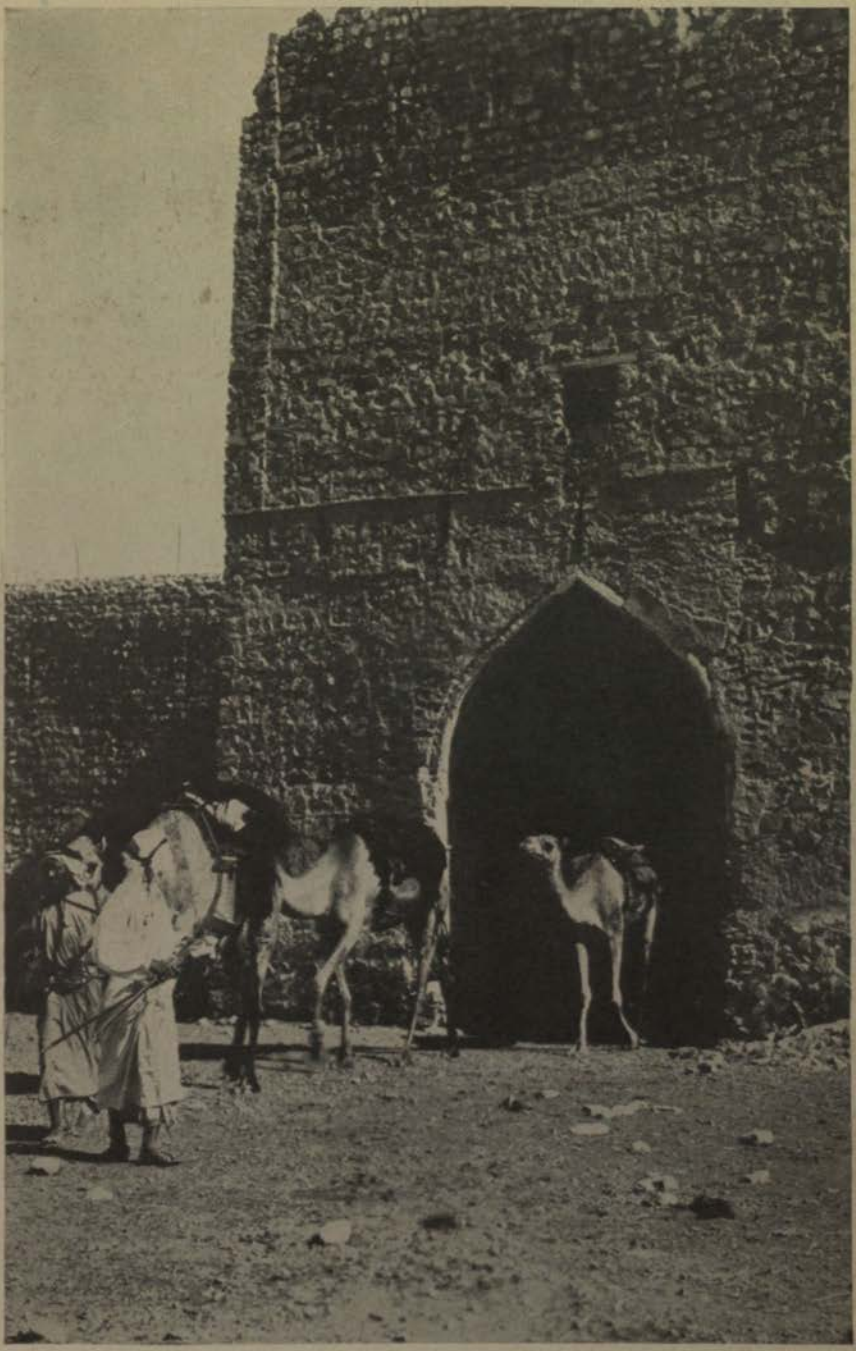
THE two southern corners of the Arabian peninsula as it projects into the Indian Ocean are covered by low mountains between which are inhabited valleys. Oman, the southeast corner, is the most fertile section of all eastern Arabia and at the same time the most isolated. The mountains are great rugged rocks, not high enough to have snow on their peaks, and utterly bare as far as vegetation is concerned. A more forbidding and at the same time more magnificent landscape it would be hard to find.

Between these bare rugged mountains are to be found valleys that in comparison are beautiful indeed. The rainfall in the mountain districts is not sufficient for agricultural purposes, but as in Central Arabia it is sufficient to furnish a certain amount of dry pasturage for goats and camels throughout the year, and in this way the mountain country supports a small community of Bedouins who have many of the characteristics of their brethren in inland Arabia. This community, however, is small. The great majority of the inhabitants of Oman are date gardeners settled in the irrigated valleys and the rich strip of land between the mountains and the sea. The harbors along this rocky coast are very fine, and in the days when all commerce depended on the Arab sailing vessels, these Oman towns had great commercial impor-

tance. Muscat, perhaps the best harbor of all, was the center of the slave trade once and at a later day the center of the arms traffic, which gave the British Government much trouble till about five years before the Great War. These arms were imported from Europe and were re-exported to the Persian and Baluchistan coast. They were destined for Afghanistan and the provinces of Central Asia, and they made the northwest frontier of India a very uncomfortable place.

Oman is a curiously isolated island of Arab life. On one side is the sea and by that route Baluchistan and Persia are nearer neighbors than is any port of importance in Arabia. On the other side is the Great Southern Desert, called by the Arabs the *Ruba el Khali* ("the empty quarter"). This desert, which fills up a large part of the southern half of the peninsula, is by Arab testimony entirely uninhabited by either man or beast. From the top of Jebel Akhdar, the highest range in Oman, it can be seen stretching away into the apparently infinite distance. Into that abode of death even the hardiest Bedouin does not venture. There is no water and no life there. I never met but one man who had penetrated that desert. He was a sheikh and to reach Mecca quickly he crossed the eastern end of it. He left a trail of dead camels behind him, but he himself came through alive.

The heat in these southern districts is extreme. Aden, on the extreme southern end of the peninsula, is supposed to be the hottest place where Britain holds sway, but the port of Muscat in Oman is nearly as bad. What makes these particular ports worse than they would otherwise be, is the fact that they are hemmed in on all sides by high, bare, rugged rocks, which imprison the heat and shut out all the breeze, with a resulting temperature on summer



A CARAVAN ENTERING MUSCAT

afternoons that is quite insupportable. Even the Arabs try to get out of these places for the summer months.

Between the mountains and the sea is a level, fertile strip which varies in width but is frequently several miles wide. This is the richest agricultural area in the whole Arabian peninsula. Water for irrigation is abundant, and the district is filled with villages and gardens with a delightful atmosphere of quiet comfort and prosperity. The valleys between the mountains are nearly as good. The soil leaves nothing to be desired and there is a very considerable supply of water. I have seen several places where the available water was more than was needed and it was allowed to run to waste because no use could be made of it.

Flowing springs are common and the pitch of the land makes irrigation easy. Underground waterways, constructed at great expense of labor and money, carry this water for long distances. These are kept in order most carefully, for water is the life of all Arabian communities. Sometimes the water is carried through surface runways. I remember one watering station perhaps three miles out in the desert, fed by water brought through a surface viaduct all that distance. The country was rough and the source of the water was not even in sight.

Oman gardens are beautiful, with dates and alfalfa, lemons and pomegranates, all raised in profusion. Even mangoes are grown. There is no other part of Arabia where there is such a variety of tropical and sub-tropical fruits. Wheat is cultivated in some quantity. Far inland in Oman I once counted one hundred and thirty-seven kernels in a head of wheat, by far the largest number that I have ever seen. There are fields of sugar cane and some local manufacture of a very inferior sugar. Con-

siderable cotton is grown, and a good supply of vegetables as well. Almost anything seems to grow in Oman.

The sea is full of fish, and for some distance inland fish is cheaper and more popular than any meat available. There are no refrigerator cars in that part of the world, but supplying fish to inland points is a well-developed industry. The fish are cooked before starting on their journey and then carried as far as a fast donkey can take them in thirty-six hours, which is a good distance. At the end of this journey they would hardly tempt a western palate, but in those inland towns they are esteemed a great delicacy.

The people in Oman are descendants of the Khawarij, one of the earliest of the many divisions of Islam, protestants against the scandalous laxities of the Damascus and Baghdad caliphs. Part of this puritan sect settled in North Africa and part among the mountains and valleys and harbors of Oman. Their location and their theological convictions both tended to isolate them from the rest of Arabia, and they form a very distinct unit today. Slavery has always flourished in that part of Arabia, perhaps because it was easier to use a large number of slaves profitably there than elsewhere. Whatever the reason, a far larger admixture of negro blood is seen in Oman than anywhere else in the peninsula. In addition there has been a large admixture from the Makran coast of Baluchistan. Fifty years ago and less, there was continual intertribal warfare in Baluchistan, and the raiders would often bring their prisoners and sell them as slaves to the Arabs of Oman. There is thus a considerable strain of Baluch blood in the community. This process came to a stop with the British occupation of Baluchistan, but there are many Baluch slaves in Oman

who can tell of the old days and the old conditions before the British came.

These mountains are very inaccessible in places and harbor some curious remnants of an older civilization which must certainly antedate Mohammedanism in the peninsula, if indeed they are not remnants of a social structure far older than that. In the mountains behind Ras el Kheima lives a community which talks a second language bearing no resemblance to Arabic. They resemble the Arabs physically and use Arabic in their intercourse with the outside world, but for conversation among themselves they have an entirely different tongue. They have some remarkable customs. After the two important meals of the day they gather in circles and howl vigorously for about five minutes under the direction of a leader, the whole process reminding one of nothing so much as college boys rooting at a football game. It is evidently a remnant of some non-Islamic religion. One wonders whether in the fastnesses of their mountains they are Mohammedan at all. The Mohammedans of the valleys look with grave disapproval on these irregularities when they have an occasional opportunity to see them.

There are stories current among the Arabs of similar remnants on the other side of the peninsula in the Yemen mountains of the southwest, where even cannibalism is said to be practised. It is well, however, to take such stories with a grain of salt, for the Arab is fond of tall stories, and the inhabitants of Oman seem especially susceptible to their charm. A favorite in the district near the Great Southern Desert concerns a place or places where the sand is so soft and light that although perfectly dry, it engulfs men and animals and other solid bodies as if it were water.

Social life in Oman does not differ significantly from that seen in the oases of inland Arabia, except that there has been less contact with the outside world and perhaps as a result of that lack, or perhaps because of the climate and a racial inheritance which includes a distinct negro element, there is less intensity to life. No one seems anxious to accumulate great wealth or fiercely desirous of exterminating infidels. Whatever the reason, the surprising thing about Oman society is its easy-going nature. There is a greater amount of comfort among the rank and file of the people and a more peaceful attitude toward life in general than prevails elsewhere in Arabia. No one works very hard, but there appears to be plenty to eat and on holidays everybody seems to have bright new clothes. There is more obesity in Oman than in all the rest of the peninsula put together.

The use of perfumes is especially common in Oman. A man's clothes are almost black with the dirt that has clung to his oiled and perfumed clothing, and about him are to be perceived smells ancient and modern. He luxuriates in such a heavenly atmosphere. A traveler in that part of the world remonstrated with his servant because of his obvious need of a bath, obvious indeed to more senses than one. But the servant had just spent a *rupee* for perfume which had been smeared over his body and clothes. "No, indeed, I cannot take a bath now and wash off all that perfume. How then should I get any value at all from my *rupee?*"

The gardens of Oman are in large part worked by their owners, something that is rarely seen in places like Katif and Hasa. The volume of trade is small as compared with that of large centers such as Bahrein or Kuwait, because there is no large Bedouin community to be served,



OMAN TYPES

and also because no single great center of trade seems to have developed. As a result there are many small merchants scattered over the country in the various towns, but no enormously rich dealers in one great city. Matra is the center for the district, but its merchants are not very rich judged by Bahrein standards, and their isolation from the interior is so complete that they hardly affect the general situation. The artisan class is quite well developed, as might be expected where the community as a whole has enough money to buy comfortable clothes and a certain number of utensils. Even the poorest sleep on beds and have a fair amount of household furniture in their houses. The number of shops is large, most of the trade being in the hands of small dealers.

The result of these economic conditions is a society which shows a division between the rich and the poor, and to some extent between the land-owners and the cultivators, but a division not marked by the usual arrogance on the one hand or servility on the other. A surprising atmosphere of good fellowship and democracy permeates the community. The sheikh, who is often the only man of wealth in the town, holds a reception for the citizens of the place every morning. The crowd entertained in the reception room will probably include a number of slaves, who, like the rest, spend a good part of the morning in a friendly chat with the strangers who may be enjoying the sheikh's hospitality and the other citizens of the town who come in for the general fraternal talk-*fest*. Every one has time to sit and visit for half the morning before going to work. News is exchanged and opinions are compared and a considerable community spirit developed.

Breakfast is served at these morning receptions.

Bread with sugar sprinkled thickly on it and cooking fat poured over it is passed around. Oman bread is baked in great round pancakes a foot and half in diameter and about the thickness of blotting paper. It is made of whole wheat flour, and these loaves of bread piled one on top of the other with sugar and fat added make a dish that is fit for a king. This preliminary dish is followed by a second of somewhat the same sort if the entertainer wishes to show unusual hospitality or is entertaining some unusual guest. Coffee is served several times.

The making and serving of coffee is an affair of great importance all over Arabia, and nowhere more so than in Oman. It is roasted fresh while the guests sit talking or eating their sugary breakfast bread. A fire is built and a cupful of green coffee berries is poured into a long-handled, little, round frying-pan. These berries are roasted until they are quite black and pounded to a powder at once in the pestle. Men of any considerable wealth have brass pestles, and those with a clear bell-like tone are greatly prized. The making of coffee is thus advertised to the entire community. As the slave wields the pestle, he pounds with a musical rhythm that gives the effect of a miniature church bell. The slaves love the rhythm and the publicity and often have to be restrained in the interest of conversation in the room.

There are many slaves to do the work in Oman, but even they seem to lead no very strenuous life and to be abundantly nourished. They are well treated, much better than their unfortunate brethren in the pearl-diving districts of the Pirate Coast, and altogether they appear quite contented with their lot. Some can read and write and many of them are the trusted confidants of their masters. There are the usual number of blind and other

beggars in these Oman communities, and there are a few lepers. In such a leisurely and benevolent atmosphere these beggars have an easy time of it.

Religiously the inhabitants of Oman are earnest and faithful in all the observances of their own faith; none indeed are more so, but they are tolerant and open-minded to a degree unknown elsewhere in Arabia. Religious discussions are not taboo in that country, and I have even had men ask for a Christian service so that they might come and see what it was like. The women have mosques of their own to worship in, a thing that I have never seen elsewhere. Everywhere else in Arabia the women are supposed to pray but not to enter a mosque with the men. Such a thing would be unthinkable, so they are universally condemned to pray at home and forego the advantages of congregational prayer. In Oman only are they provided with their own mosques where they can pray just as the men do. No part of eastern Arabia has come so little into contact with the outside world as this isolated district, but nevertheless there is no section of it anywhere that has such a diffusion of elementary education. A large percentage of the women can read in some of the Oman communities and this, as far as I know Arabia, is a condition quite unique.

In spite of the general prosperity, family life in Oman is on a plane almost as high as among the primitive Bedouins of the desert. Women do not veil strictly as they do in the towns farther north, and there is a surprising degree of comradeship in married life compared with other parts of Arabia. I have been in guest houses in Oman where the women of the house sat with the men entertaining visitors. The women were veiled, of course, for it was a public guest room and any one might enter.

In more private associations, when we were the only visitors, veils were sometimes entirely dispensed with. There is considerable participation by the wife in the administration of the establishment. Several times I have been entertained in houses where the man of the house was absent and where his wife took charge of all arrangements for our comfort, coming to the guest hall in person to see that we were adequately cared for. Altogether the family life, as it is seen from the outside, is far and away better than that which obtains in most parts of Arabia and nearly as pure and as fine as among the Bedouins themselves. There seems more hope for future progress in Oman than in any other province of Arabia. There is an economic basis broad enough to support a real civilization, and there might perhaps be further resources that scientific well-digging could bring to light. Whether or not there are mineral deposits in the mountains could only be determined by a competent geologist. However, in the diffusion of material comfort among all classes and the development of a feeling of unstratified social equality throughout the entire community, as well as in the growth of a community spirit of hospitality and brotherhood, the Omân towns have much to teach the rest of Arabia.







SCENES IN OMAN

CHAPTER VI

THE ARABS OF MESOPOTAMIA

MESOPOTAMIA does not belong to Arabia geographically. It lies to the north of the peninsula and includes the territory between the mountains of Asia Minor on the north, the mountains of Persia on the east, the Syrian desert on the west and the Persian Gulf on the south. The area enclosed between these limits is enormous. These are its natural boundaries, but politically the territory included takes in certain districts that belong to Persia and Turkey as well as the kingdom of Mesopotamia. It is of interest to include Mesopotamia in any discussion of Arab life, for although the Mesopotamians are not in Arabia geographically, nor even politically, racially they are Arabs as truly as the inhabitants of Nejd or the dwellers in the valleys of Oman. Practically all of the inhabitants of Mesopotamia are Arabic speaking and Arabic in origin, the chief exceptions being the numerous Jews who have come into the country from the north and the small community of Sabaeans, or fire-worshippers, who are a remnant of the people that the Arabs found inhabiting the country. The Arab is the dominant element, and the others together would probably not amount to five per cent of the whole.

The character of the country is most easily understood if we start by saying that Mesopotamia is the enormous

delta of two rivers—the Euphrates and the Tigris. With insignificant exceptions, it is one vast level expanse made up of the rich silt that these rivers have brought down. It contains no physical features whatever that call for comment except the plains and the rivers, unless we mention that combination of plain and river which covers a considerable area, namely the marsh. In the past this district was the seat of some of the great empires of antiquity—Assyria and Babylonia and Persia. When Xenophon marched over it about 400 B. C., it was and had been for centuries one of the world's centers of power and productiveness. It supported a vast population in those days, how vast no one knows, but the ruins of ancient cities suggest that it must have been very great indeed. The basis of its greatness was the use of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers for irrigation. By this means the whole country had been transformed into one vast garden. The area was not so large then as it is now, for year by year the delta encroaches on the sea. It is supposed that in ancient times the sea reached up as far as Gurna at least, and that is a hundred miles from the present mouth of the river.

Under the Mohammedan caliphs of Baghdad the irrigation dams, waterways and smaller canals that had existed for centuries were allowed to fall into greater and greater decay. The Mongol invasion of Mesopotamia, which culminated in the capture of Baghdad in 1258 A. D., resulted in the complete destruction of this ancient system of irrigation. Ever since it has been in ruins, but the courses of the larger waterways are still distinguishable, and engineers tell us that they can decipher the entire system. The country has been a desert since that day, populated by nomad tribes who roam over the vast



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A BOAT ON THE TIGRIS RIVER

level plains and raise, by means of the scanty rainfall, a meager amount of wheat and barley in favorable seasons.

Along the rivers in their upper courses are a few gardens, irrigated by means of various draught animals and water-wheels, which elevate water from the stream to the level of the land above. At Gurna the Tigris and Euphrates join to form one river and at Mohammerah the Karun empties into this united stream. The three rivers thus flow into the ocean as one enormous waterway, known locally as the "Arab River." For the last hundred miles before the sea is reached, the fresh water of the river ebbs and flows with the tides, and by cutting outlets along the river banks gardens may be automatically irrigated twice a day if so much water is desired. Along these lower stretches each bank of the river is lined with beautiful gardens, which reach a depth of some miles in places and extend in practically an unbroken expanse all the way up to Basra and in less prolific culture even as far as Gurna. These date gardens are beautiful things, beautiful for what they are now, and more beautiful still as a suggestion of what all Mesopotamia might be. They are also one of the most melancholy things in the world as reminders of what the past developed and the present has wasted.

The land has enormous resources for agricultural development. That whole vast district may be made into the garden spot of the earth. The soil is the best in the world, river silt hundreds of feet deep. It is as level as a parlor floor, with just enough pitch between the big rivers, and between the north and south, to make irrigation easy. All that is necessary is a perfected system of irrigation, and although the necessary investment would

be large, running up to hundreds of millions of dollars, it should bring excellent returns. The trouble hitherto has been the unstable character of the government and the consequent risk to which any such investment would be exposed. During the time of the spring high waters, a disaffected tribe might obtain control of some important dam and with one stick of dynamite destroy nearly the whole system. But with a stable government the project should be one of great promise. The water is at hand, three riverfuls of it, and as if to prove the practicability of the dream, we know that in the ages of antiquity these resources were utilized for this purpose and with the most splendid success. Whether there is actually water enough to transform every square mile of the country into a garden or whether the supply of available land will prove to be more than the water can care for, especially now since the area has so greatly increased, can only be told after the project is tried. Certainly there is water enough for hundreds of square miles, enough indeed to make Mesopotamia one of the richest countries of its size in the world. Already one new irrigated area has been developed by the Hindiya Barrage built by a British concern between 1911 and 1913 as the first step in the reconstruction of the ancient irrigation system. The erection of this great barrage on the Euphrates River was due to the Young Turks, the dam being the first unit in a comprehensive irrigation project for the entire country which had been drawn up for them by the noted engineer, Sir William Willcocks. It is only a beginning, but it has made the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose over many square miles of territory.

With the exception of the rich petroleum deposits which are said to exist throughout the Mosul district and





GARDENS IN MESOPOTAMIA

which may play a prominent part in the economic development of the country, Mesopotamia may be regarded as a purely agricultural land. From this standpoint it is best considered in two sections. There is the river-irrigated date-growing district to the south, with Basra as its center, and there is the district to the north inhabited by nomads, semi-nomads and river agriculturists, with its principal center in Baghdad and a second capital further north in Mosul.

The date gardeners along the river in the Basra territory resemble in many ways the cultivators that can be seen in any oasis town in Arabia. Their work is very similar. Irrigation systems must be constructed. Channels must be provided to carry the water to the roots of the date palms and to the squares of alfalfa and other crops. There is this difference, however, that the water flows of itself. Twice a day the tide of the ocean backs up the water of the great Arab River as far as Gurna, about a hundred miles from the sea. The extensive cultivation of dates stops at that point. The water can be shut out of a field if so desired, or the gates can be opened and as much allowed to enter as is needed. The supply is unlimited and can be had twice a day the year around. The soil is ideal. It is rich and hundreds of feet deep. In natural endowment Mesopotamia is a paradise for date gardeners.

As a matter of fact, however, that country is far from a paradise for date gardeners. The favorable conditions ought to make their work easier and their remuneration greater, but the facts are otherwise. Their condition is worse than that of the cultivators in Hasa. It is the story of the Bahrein pearl banks over again. The increased wealth of the Bahrein pearl banks has not bene-

fited the Bahrein pearl diver; it has produced richer merchants in that district. In the same way the land-owners of Mesopotamia are past all comparison richer than the land-owners of the oases in Arabia but the actual cultivators of the soil are far worse off. Improved conditions and an increased return on each man's work have not benefited them at all.

Their condition is pitiful. The gardens are owned by men who live far away in distance and farther away still in sympathy. The Sheikh of Kuwait owns large gardens in this district; indeed his principal wealth is reputed to be invested there. The same is true of Sheikh Khazal of Mohammerah, the Persian governor for southern Arabistan. Many of the gardens are owned by rich men who live in Basra and Baghdad. Their affairs are administered by a local agent, whose sole interest lies in driving as hard a bargain as possible with the unfortunate cultivator. If an unfavorable year comes, there is no easily available judge or ruler to modify the contract as in Arabia. As a result the gardeners are bitterly oppressed. Men are practically forced into bankruptcy in order to live up to oppressive contracts during a hard year. Competition is keen, and in these large communities where the gardens stretch for scores of miles and where it is not easy to turn to other occupations, where above all there is no public sentiment to appeal to and no ruler with Arab ideas of justice to frown upon the rich oppressor, it is possible to push the gardener down very close to the limit of bare subsistence. His clothes are in tatters. His food is poor. His house is wretched. Above all he is a discouraged and hard-pressed individual with a hopeless and despairing outlook on life.

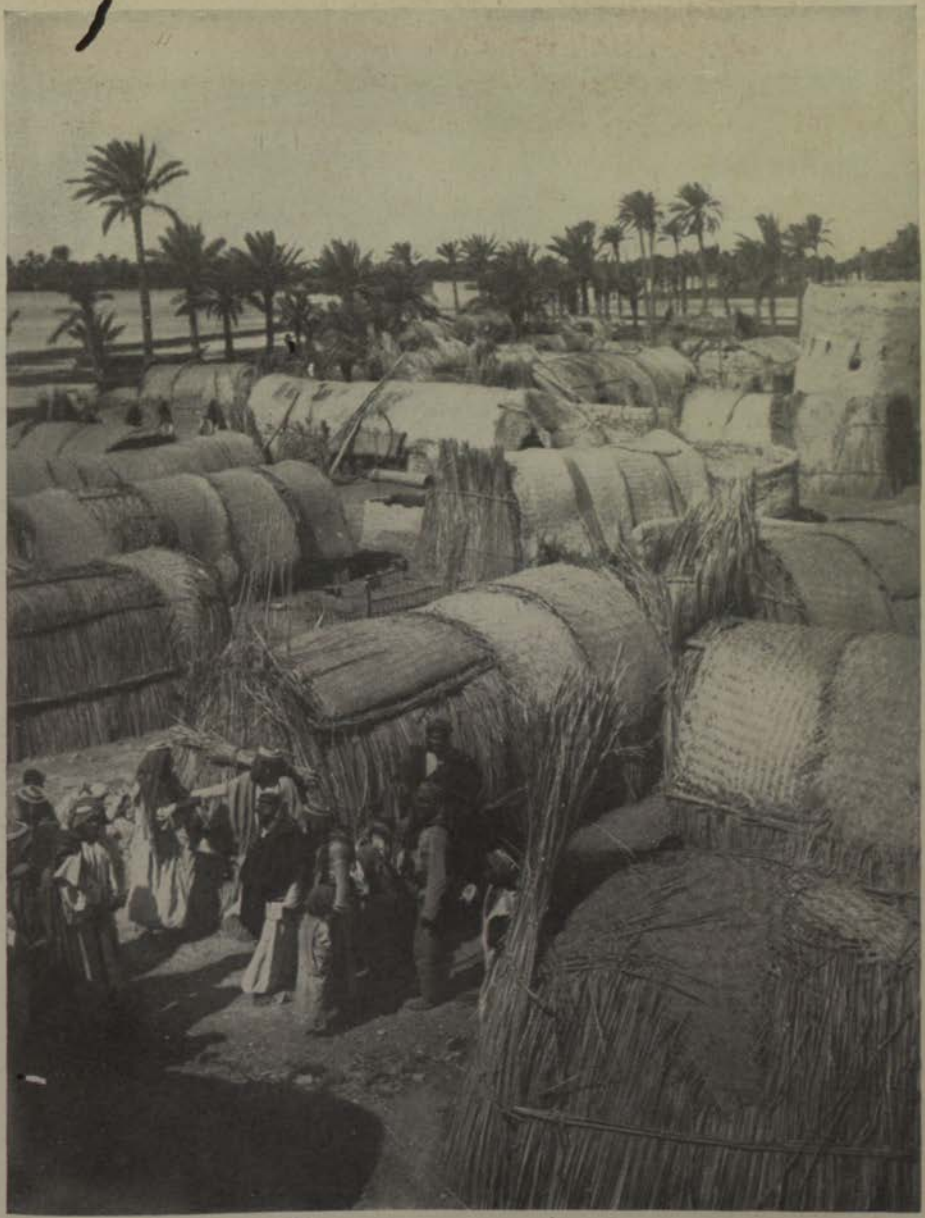
It is customary to abuse the Turkish Government as responsible for these conditions. That government has much to answer for, but it is doubtful whether even the efficient and benevolent rule of the British will improve the lot of the date gardener a great deal so long as the present system remains unchanged. The trouble is that the owner has no contact with his gardener except through his agent, and is coerced by no intelligent and effective public sentiment. Whether in Turkish or British territory, he lives under a government built on the theory that contracts made in good faith must be executed at all costs and that knows no redress for the gardener except that he seek employment elsewhere, a thing that is very difficult to do. The adjustments possible in the oases of Arabia, where it is the function of the sheikh to modify oppressive contracts and where it is understood that an unfavorable reputation will speedily endanger the life of the land-owner, are out of the question in Mesopotamia.

In addition to the date gardeners who cultivate the irrigated land along the last hundred miles of the Arab River from Gurna to the Gulf, there are also a number of so-called Marsh Arabs along the rivers in Lower Mesopotamia, who raise rice, wheat and barley on land that is overflowed in the spring when water is high. Rice is their favorite crop and the one that is most reliable. In that country the visitor is surprised at being served with loaves of bread of the usual flat pancake-shape but snowy white instead of the light brown color of the whole wheat flour which is universal over all Arabia. I asked my host with much surprise whether he imported his flour from Bombay and he laughed. He hardly knew where

Bombay was. "No," he said, "here we make our bread from rice flour. When the wheat crop is a failure, as in the past year, we have almost nothing else."

These overflow districts, which are marshes in the spring when the rivers overflow, dry down to hard soil later in the year. To keep the water high for a few weeks longer than it would naturally remain so, temporary dams are constructed across some of the smaller streams, leaving an opening to allow boats to pass and water to run through. These dams persist in the face of a strong current in a way that is surprising. Mud, tree branches, mats, soil and the like seem to be the only building material, for there is no stone within hundreds of miles. The dams require a large amount of labor, and of course are coöperative enterprises. Possibly because of this necessity for coöperative effort, the Marsh Arab communities appear to have developed a good degree of community spirit.

Like their race everywhere, these Marsh Arabs do not live in isolated individual houses in the midst of their fields but collect in larger or smaller towns, some of them of considerable size. These towns are located usually in the fork of a river, or where several streams come together. In Lower Mesopotamia there are many small channels that carry water either out of the main river or into it. The Marsh Arabs get about in picturesque, high-prowed, black river boats, black because they are covered with a thick coat of native bitumen which wells from the ground in one or two places in Mesopotamia and is an indication, so the engineers tell us, that petroleum is to be found in that country. These river boats, which are the one means of transportation, are built somewhat on the lines of a canoe and take consid-



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AN ARAB VILLAGE ON THE LOWER EUPHRATES

erable skill to navigate. They are capable of great speed and are driven either by a sail or by oars as the occasion requires. To a stranger they seem very unstable, but the Marsh Arab, who has practically lived in them ever since he was a baby, finds them abundantly stable and perfectly safe.

From a distance the houses occupied by these people are very picturesque. The reeds that grow in great abundance in the marshes of Lower Mesopotamia are gathered and when dry are tied in great bundles perhaps two feet in diameter. They are ten to fifteen feet tall or even more, and two bundles tied together at the tops are bent over to form an arch. Each of these arches forms one of the ribs of the house. They are placed every four to six feet, giving an air of solidity and dignity to the structure that is most unusual for this sort of simple architecture. Over these ribs a mat roof is constructed which is surprisingly tight even in the heaviest rains. The houses vary in size, and the largest ones, which serve as guest halls for the sheikhs and the rich, may be seventy-five feet long and twenty feet broad.

This agricultural district is peculiar in that while it has a settled community engaged in agricultural pursuits, there is no private ownership of land. The Marsh Arabs form a group almost untouched by Europeans. In the one district we visited all land is owned by the government, in this case a sheikh far removed from the district. The only tax that he levies is a moderate rental for the land. Apparently there is little difficulty in getting land; at least no one complained of any trouble of that sort, nor does there seem to be any difficulty in keeping the same plot of land indefinitely if the cultivator wishes to do so. The local governor is an efficient and more or less benevo-

lent man and seemed to be very well liked. The group as a whole enjoys a degree of prosperity and comfort most unusual for an Arab community. Everybody has enough to eat and enough to wear and a good house to live in. Crops seem to be quite reliable. If the wheat and barley harvest fails, the rice does not. Taxes are light and the local government good.

The most conspicuous difference from the typical agricultural community in Arabia lies in the fact that here the old equality of the desert is preserved. There is no class of rich citizens who outshine their fellows. There are a few merchants of a small sort. Amara, the nearest city, is so close to the town we visited that the shops were very small, most of the trading being done in the larger city. We saw few artisans. The community seemed to be free from caste divisions and to enjoy a spirit of equality and brotherhood much like that of the Bedouins themselves.

Another surprising thing is the freedom of all classes. The women have discarded the veil completely and associate with the men freely, being seen on the street apparently under no restraint whatever. This is a refreshing contrast to the other communities of Arabs; indeed the Marsh Arabs are far ahead of even the Bedouins in this respect. These women buy and sell in the bazaar and appear to participate in all the activities of the town with no hesitation whatever. They visited the temporary dispensary that we set up and in their self-assertion were sometimes harder to manage than the men. It is interesting to note that these Arabs are all Shiahs. "No," said the guard that accompanied us from Ahwaz as we were coming in for a visit, "there are no infidels in all this district. Every one is a Shiah."

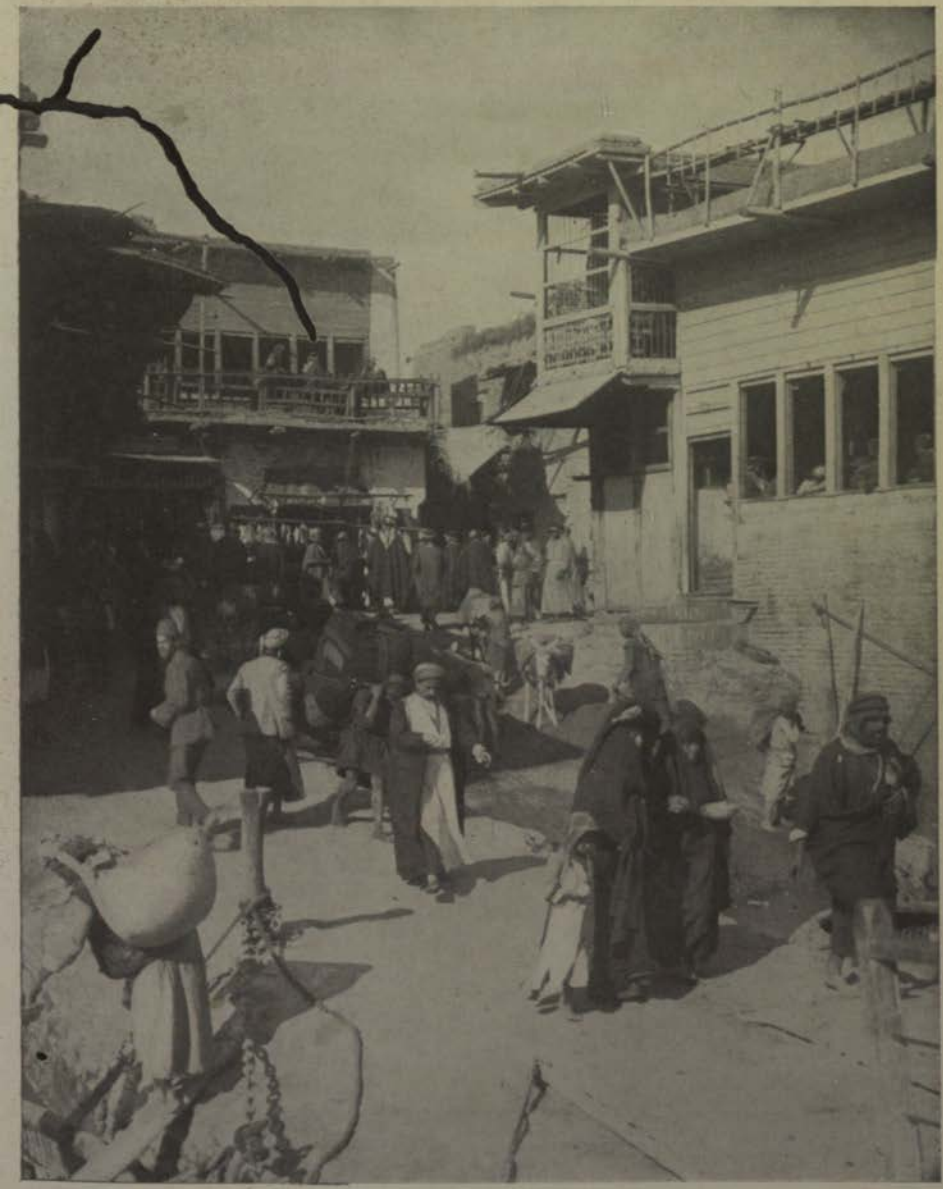
As compared with the southern district the northern part of Mesopotamia grows only a small amount of dates. There are a few gardens around each city, which furnish fresh dates for local consumption during the season, but in this region water has to be raised from the river to the ground level by animals, by the method in use in Arabia. The gardens are small and confined to the river-side and are of no real significance in the economic support of the country. These northern regions are not devoid of rainfall, and a meager return is secured by sowing wheat and barley on unirrigated land. Such cultivation, however, is uncertain, and in about one year out of every three the crop is a dead failure.

The great mass of the people are nomadic or semi-nomadic. Everywhere there can be found pasturage for the nomad's flocks and herds and wells for the watering of stock. Many of the Bedouin nomads engage in agriculture occasionally in good seasons. Even among those who refuse to degrade themselves by becoming agriculturists of any degree, the standards of life are considerably higher than among the Bedouins of Central Arabia. The supply of forage is more abundant, and their flocks of camels and sheep and goats are very large. These nomads have better clothes, very much more abundant food, and in every way live a more tolerable life than that of their brothers in the Central Arabian desert. Horses are common in Mesopotamia. They are a luxury but not such a tax on the resources of the owner as farther south, for there are always forage and water for them. Every Arab of position expects to own and ride one; otherwise he loses caste. Arab horses are beautiful animals and are trained as household pets, much as a fine dog is trained with us. They are ridden without saddle

or bridle, except as these appurtenances are put on for show, and it is a beautiful sight to see an Arab on his pet mare galloping over the plain, the two appearing almost as one animal.

Among these nomads much the same ideas of [illegible] and brotherhood prevail as are seen in Central Arabia. Tribal loyalty is very strong, and no one would think of stealing from a brother tribesman. From another tribe, however, there is a continual effort to steal all the hoofed property that can be abstracted. Conceptions of property are the same sort of semi-communistic ideas that seem to characterize the Bedouin everywhere. The game of compulsory exchange goes on merrily and is the spice of life to those hardy desert rangers. Whatever government eventually prevails may expect to have a hard time in taming them and teaching them some sort of civilized respect for the property of other people.

In marked contrast to the more or less primitive existence of these Mesopotamian nomads is the life of the large cities. Indeed Baghdad, Mosul and Basra, the principal cities of Mesopotamia, are more or less similar to cities in America in their organization and in the different classes of people they contain. The merchant class, which is large and prosperous, includes petty shopkeepers and great merchants with every gradation between these two extremes. The bazaars show a bewildering profusion of goods, in part locally manufactured and in part imported. The great bazaar in Baghdad has entire streets devoted to the sale of the peculiar red shoe that is characteristic of that city. Whole streets again have little or nothing except earthenware of every sort and description. Great rooms are piled to the ceiling with these utensils. In a general way



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A SCENE IN BAGHDAD

each kind of goods has its special section of the bazaar. The brass- and copper-smiths' quarter rings like a small boiler factory all day long. The artisans who are engaged in producing these commodities form a considerable section of the Mesopotamian city population and are fairly prosperous and contented, much more so than the date gardeners of the outside districts. Supreme over them all stands the Mesopotamian silver worker, whose antimony silver work can scarcely be duplicated anywhere in the world.

The professional classes in these Mesopotamian cities are fairly well developed. There are teachers of every sort. Some of them have been trained abroad, but many are indigenous and a very great credit to the schools that have turned them out. There are a number of government schools, and in addition the different religious sects maintain schools of their own. In these days when western education is in great demand, the schools of the Jews and the Christians are patronized by an increasing number of Mohammedans. No local medical profession nas been developed as yet, but the wealth and the culture of Mosul, Baghdad and Basra have attracted a considerable number of trained physicians from outside. We have therefore the beginnings of a medical profession, and although it is not yet indigenous, it will soon become so. Its ethics are not of a very high order; the campaign of the American College of Surgeons to abolish fee-splitting would not make much headway among Mesopotamian doctors, but time will develop ethical standards, and at the worst the profession is a long way in advance of the quacks that infest Arabia proper. There is also a well-established group of lawyers. One of the results of the governing of the country for hundreds of years by

the Turks, a foreign Power, was the development of an elaborate judicial procedure and a vast deal of red tape in all government business. It is not possible to see that the consequent appearance of a legal profession has brought any great blessings in its train.

These various professional groups, together with the prosperous merchants, have gradually come to constitute a leisured middle class somewhat similar to that in America. This development is confined to the three large cities, Mosul, Baghdad and Basra, with Amara as a possible addition to the list. In these cities the rich merchants and land-owners have fortunes comparable with small fortunes in America. They have accounts in New York, in Manchester and in the Continental centers, and import goods direct from all of these places. Many of them read French or English. They take newspapers and keep in touch with the life of the world. This class of merchants and land-owners is the most civilized of any Arab community to be found anywhere. Many of them have traveled in India and Syria, and no small number have even visited Europe. Some of the doctors and lawyers have studied in Paris and Berlin and Vienna. There is a considerable amount of real culture among these men and women even now, and the next generation promises to show far more.

These three large cities are by far the most advanced section of Mesopotamia. They appear to have in them a large degree of modern civilization. Nevertheless, even in these cities there is more tinsel than real gold. One questions in pessimistic moments whether there is anything except tinsel, in spite of all that has been done to give Mesopotamia a good government, general education and modern improvements. As far as population is con-



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COFFEE SHOPS IN MOSUL

cerned, the great cities are only a small fraction of Mesopotamia, for the last census gives the population of the entire country as 2,849,282, and that of the three cities of Basra, Baghdad and Mosul combined is probably not much over 350,000.

Much of the material advance in these Mesopotamian cities is, of course, an indirect outcome of the Great War. Few countries anywhere were more affected by the changes that the war brought in its wake. It is impossible to hazard a guess as to the ultimate effect of the last ten years' catastrophic happenings in Mesopotamia. Western civilization in its strong and unfortunately too often in its bad aspects has poured in on that country like a flood. Whether the various campaigns of the war and the whole influence of the English occupation, benevolent and efficient as it is, have resulted in genuine progress is difficult to say. Under the Turks, who had governed the three *vilayets,* or districts, of Basra, Baghdad and Mosul for hundreds of years as a part of the Turkish empire, the original Arab system of government had been changed very considerably. Since the war that change has been carried much farther by the British Government. In general terms, Mesopotamia was administered by Great Britian under a mandate at first, and later in 1921 a constitutional monarchy was created with an Arab ruler, Feisul, son of King Husein of Hejaz, on the throne. Religious liberty was guaranteed by the Constitution adopted at that time. A modern parliamentary government was set up, with more or less the same organization, codified law and court procedure that we are used to at home. It is open to question whether this is in accordance with the genius of the Arab race or whether it is not imposing an alien system on the coun-

try rather than fostering the development of something indigenous and natural. Under such a system the enforcement of law may become of necessity very mechanical, as when an Indian Sepoy nearly knocks down an inoffensive Arab pedestrian by a blow with his fist for no greater crime than walking on the wrong side of the road to avoid a mud puddle. In the courts, too, a crowd of lawyers and an abundance of red tape, with venal underlings, may serve to make the paths of justice tortuous and uncertain in spite of the best intentions on the part of the presiding judge.

Nevertheless, even under such handicaps as those we have indicated, there is no questioning the very great material progress that is to be seen in Mesopotamia. Even before the war one of Baghdad's streets was paved, and since the British have taken over the administration of the kingdom, all sorts of improvements have been introduced. The railroad system of the country now extends 360 miles from Basra to Baghdad and from there on nearly to Mosul. There are several subsidiary lines, the total amounting to over 1000 miles. By far the greater part of this mileage was constructed by the British for war purposes. Under British rule, also, the Hindiya Barrage and other less important irrigation works have been kept in order and improved and extensive harbor improvements at Basra undertaken.

British sanitary and health officers have been appointed for Mesopotamia and no praise is too high for their largely unappreciated but nevertheless unselfish and extremely efficient labors in that country. The hospital work that has been undertaken in Basra, Baghdad and Amara, the inspection of eating houses, and the maintaining of sanitary conditions have been excellently done.



© *Asia*

BASRA CUSTOM HOUSES

Unfortunately the fact that this work is practical benevolence of the finest sort and carried on in the finest spirit has not served to commend sanitary regulations to the Arab, who regards them as a nuisance, a hindrance to business and an infringement of his personal liberty.

Mesopotamia has also grappled with the whole problem of education most courageously. An educational system has been organized which includes normal schools for teachers and a large number of primary and secondary schools for both boys and girls. There are a smaller number of high schools, and a central university is planned. Fifteen years ago the dominant European influence in this community was French, and no one could claim to be educated who could not talk that language fluently. There was a marked change a little later, and before the Great War German was the commanding influence. Now, of course, the predominant western influence is English, and it seems likely to remain so, for commerce will probably talk the English language for many years, whatever political upheavals the country may be destined to experience. It is true that the educational system has not as yet taken very deep root and that much of the work done is very superficial, but it is none the less exceedingly creditable and encouraging. Moreover, this western system of education will probably be more or less permanent, for it will always be the gateway to remunerative positions.

In general, the people of Mesopotamia have been brought into contact with conditions of modern life and are anxious for further progress. New wants have been created, and a certain increase in the commerce of the country is the inevitable result. All manner of western dress goods and shoes are to be found in the bazaars, as

well as many western food products, such as candies and fancy crackers. The country is lighted by kerosene oil, much of which comes from America. Numbers of automobiles are to be seen, and in some places even electric lights. All these things represent the gratification of wants that did not exist previous to the entrance of western influence.

There has also been a development of the export trade of the country. However, the articles for export are not many nor of great amount. Dates are the principal product, together with a certain amount of wheat and rice and some hides and wool. In the long run, of course, no more can be brought into the country than is sent out of it, and the trade of Mesopotamia cannot increase to any great figure until her own natural resources are developed.

Just how far these various modern improvements will go remains to be seen. If the British continue in power, there is no doubt that material development will be steady and sound. If they evacuate the country and leave it to an independent local government, progress will be much slower, to say the least. During the war wages went up to fabulous heights, and although prices of food and rent advanced even more, there is no doubt that the sum total of the war's influence was to raise the standard of living in the cities and to stimulate enormously the desire for many western products and for western education. Just now there has been a very sharp reaction; times are hard, work is scarce, wages are poor. Everything western is discounted, and the cry is for an independent national development with the elimination of every foreign influence. The common people long for the golden days of the Turks, forgetting with a completeness quite as-

tonishing the nature of those golden days, now only ten years and less in the past.

The fundamental difficulty is that the new régime, with all its virtues, is essentially an alien system imposed upon the country from without by virtue of superior military power. Thus it shares the unpopularity of alien systems the world over. The opposition to the present ruler and his British advisers is not simply the frothing of irresponsible and ambitious nationalist agitators. It is all that, but there is something far more significant underneath. I was once entertained for an afternoon by a rabid nationalist of Mesopotamia who attempted to show that the system of education introduced by the British was inferior in curriculum and in number of students to the pre-war system of the Turks, which proposition was about as reasonable as that two and two make twenty. But it would have been a great mistake to conclude that the man was primarily concerned to vindicate the Turks. He was not even primarily concerned over the educational system of Mesopotamia. Nor was he simply a fool. The thing that troubled him was the fact that his country was ruled by aliens. The tremendous following that such men have is not due to any outstanding ability they possess and still less to any profound insight into the various problems of the day, but rather to the fact that the average Arab, the man in the street in Mesopotamia, also resents that alien domination very intensely. It is hard for the unimaginative Westerner to realize that what the Arab wants is not efficient government or even good government. What he wants is self-government.

On the whole, in spite of many encouraging signs of progress, a more intimate acquaintance with affairs in

Mesopotamia distinctly dampens enthusiasm. It appears gravely doubtful whether we are on the road of progress at all—whether, in fact, we are not on a road with a very different ending. The sanitary and educational systems are both of them expensive, and it is doubtful if either can be continued now that Great Britain is no longer willing to spend large sums of money on the country. The railroads have hardly been brought to the point of self-support, and the harbor facilities of Basra, which were constructed to meet war needs, are ludicrously excessive. The local administrators now are at their wits' end to find funds sufficient to maintain them. All work on the irrigation system is at a standstill for the same reason. The whole government structure is a showy shell, vastly more expensive than can be properly shouldered by such a country. Its alien character makes this expense inevitable. The rulers who come from Great Britain demand salaries which are enormous judged by local standards, and much the same exaggerated scale of remuneration prevails throughout their staff of indigenous assistants. Creating a government that shall be modern enough to foster progress and at the same time cheap enough to sit lightly upon the community and be at least tolerable if not popular, constitutes a problem which is by no means solved.

CHAPTER VII

THE ARAB SHEIKH

THE casual visitor in Arabia sees a government which looks to him like unadulterated absolutism. The sheikh of an Arab tribe exercises unlimited power. "Whom he would he slew and whom he would he kept alive" would serve as a description of him as of Nebuchadnezzar. He is invested with absolute authority. No legislature embarrasses him. No judiciary troubles him. He exercises the functions of all departments of government. He has the power of life and death over every man, woman and child in the tribe and is answerable to no one. This means, of course, that after the fashion of oriental monarchs he will occasionally reward trifling services with extraordinary favors and trifling misdeeds with grotesque and horrible punishments. To insist on any different course is, in the Arab's mind, to limit the sheikh's absolute and untrammeled power. He has subordinates and advisers, but he is entirely unfettered by them. His responsibility is undivided and his authority absolute.

The office is hereditary and in the natural course of events passes to the eldest son on the sheikh's death. It frequently happens, however, that the father abdicates when still a good distance from the grave and assists in the transfer of the power to his successor. There are cases, too, where the eldest son is obviously a man of no

force, and on that account one of the other children assumes the office of sheikh when the time for a change comes. If there is no son of mature age ready, the reins of power may be taken by the sheikh's brother, but such a change tends to be temporary, and this brother will probably be succeeded by his nephew, the eldest son of the eldest of the previous generation. This whole arrangement is by no means invariable. The ablest ruler is the man wanted and the one who is eventually secured. No one cares very much to what family he belongs.

The organization of the Arabs into tribes and the institution of tribal government must be very ancient indeed. So far as I know, there is not the slightest trace anywhere of Arabs without such a tribal organization. There is nothing to prevent individual Arabs from electing to live in isolation but no such individuals are to be found. An Arab may occasionally leave one tribe and join another, but whether he lives in desert, inland oasis or coast community, the individual Arab owes his allegiance to the sheikh, or chief, of the group. The office of sheikh is to be found everywhere throughout Arabia. Its importance varies considerably, from the leadership of small groups of poverty-stricken nomads or villagers to the great sheikhdoms along the East Coast. When an Arab ruler extends his authority by conquest over wide areas, as in the case of Ibn Saoud, who as *emir* of the Wahabi state of the Nejd has brought most of northern and northeastern Arabia under his sway, the central government that he sets up is simply an extension of the principle of local sheikh government and the individual tribes which submit to his authority often continue to be governed locally by their own sheikhs. Sheikh government therefore coexists, and since time immemorial has



THE SHEIKH OF BAHREIN



THE CASTLE OF THE SHEIKH OF DAREEN

coexisted, by the side of such larger or more compact political units as have been built up, whether under the ancient caliphs, the Wahabis or the Turks, or under the ægis of British protection. Moreover, from all indications it seems likely that this type of government will continue to exist in some form or other, for the Arab has succeeded in developing a political system which, however inadequate it may seem to Westerners in some particulars, is surprisingly well adapted to his needs.

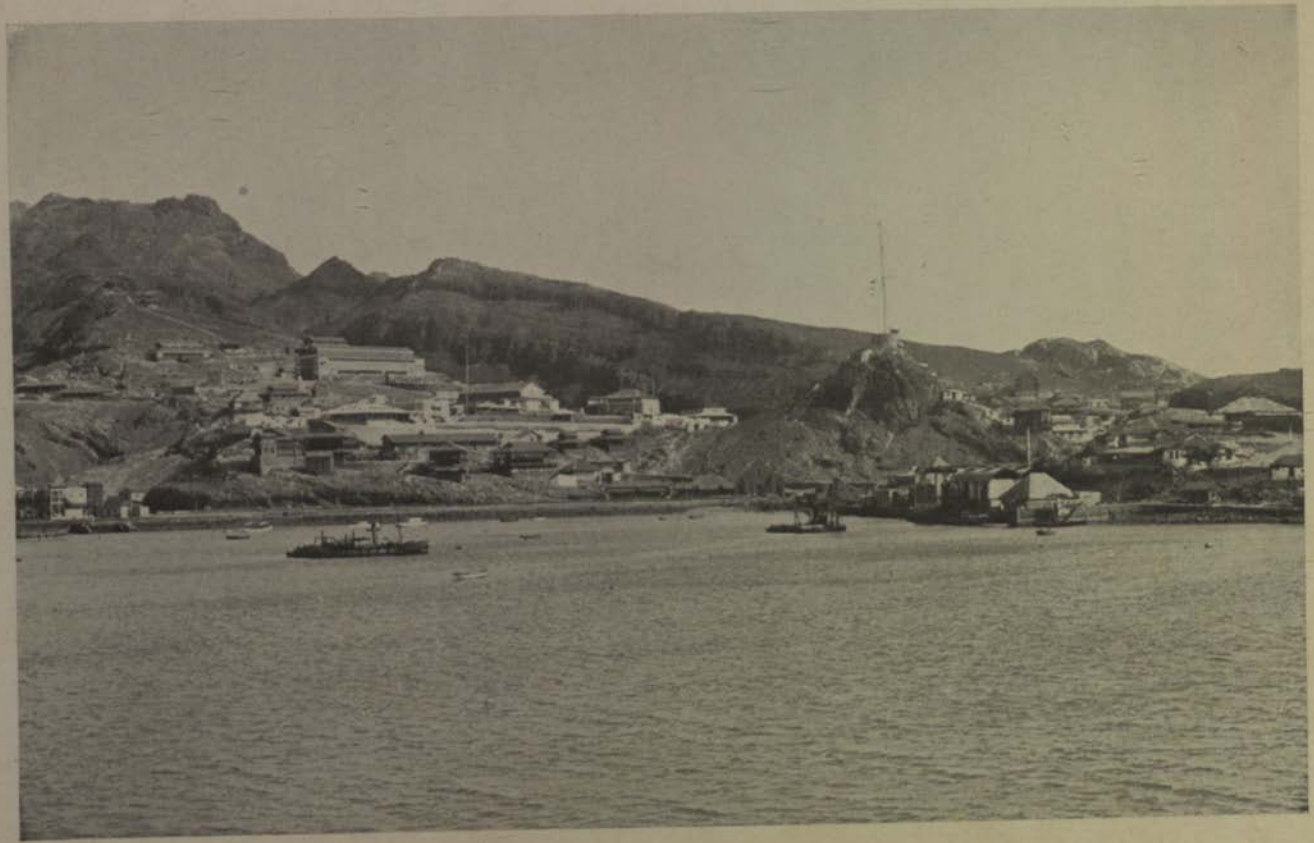
Politically, present-day Arabia comprises a number of loosely defined units coinciding roughly with geographical divisions. The boundaries of these Arab states and sheikhdoms, uncertain enough at any given moment, are in a state of constant flux. The war, especially, which brought in its train the final expulsion of the Turk, the extension of British influence and the fermenting schemes of Arab nationalism, resulted in marked changes in tribal alliances and boundaries. These show little signs of settling into static condition.

Any detailed consideration of western and southern Arabia, with its extensive areas lying along the coast of the Red Sea and the southern part of the Arabian Sea, is outside the province of this book, which concerns itself chiefly with Arab life in central and eastern Arabia and the Tigris Euphrates valley. Briefly, western and southern Arabia constitutes a strip of territory of about a hundred miles in width running along the coast and around the tip of the peninsula and comprising north to south: Hejaz, with its thriving seaport of Jidda and its much-prized custody of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, a kingdom which is ruled over at present by Husein, the *sherif* of Mecca, who under the stimulus of a substantial British subsidy and the self-assumed title "King of

the Arabs" cherishes many ambitious schemes and has even laid claim to the caliphate itself since its relinquishment by the Turks; farther south, the district of Asir, hardly a political entity, allegiance being divided between the local *Idrisi* and the rulers of the adjacent states of Hejaz, Nejd and Yemen; and next in order, occupying the end of the peninsula, the mountainous imamate of Yemen, the British protectorate of Aden and the district of Hadhramut. Each of these sections has, of course, its peculiar local features. But conditions of life in a country so influenced as is Arabia by climate and topography are very similar throughout, and whether it be east or west coast, the political system under which the Arab lives is fundamentally the same. Everywhere the powers of local government are in the hands of the sheikh; the more ambitious rulers of consolidated areas are simply glorified sheikhs, and an understanding of the sheikh system of government furnishes the key to much that is perplexing in Arab life.

In central and eastern Arabia the outstanding political phenomenon of the past twenty-five years has been the rise to power of Ibn Saoud, *emir* of the Wahabi state of inland Arabia. There are still parts of this territory that have not come under his dominion, but his is a name to conjure with throughout the entire district. A brief survey of the history of this Wahabi state should give us much insight into those qualities of leadership and functions of government which, however much they may differ from western standards, are fundamental to the Arab system.

To the western mind the normal condition of the vast peninsula of Arabia, peopled by intense individualists loosely bound together into warring tribes each loyal to



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THE CITY OF ADEN

its own sheikh, represents a sort of chaos. Nothing unites men of this stamp except some overpowering personality who gains their loyal affection because he is wise and powerful enough to deserve it. From time to time great leaders of this type do arise in Arabia, and to such a leader the Arab will attach himself with a loyalty that knows no limits. Mohammed must have been such a man, and from his day until our own there has not appeared his equal. Since the days of the first four caliphs who succeeded Mohammed at Medina up until recent years no strongly centralized government had existed in the Arabian peninsula with the single exception of the Wahabi empire built up by the Saoud dynasty during the last years of the eighteenth and early years of the nineteenth centuries. As was characteristic of such developments in the Mohammedan world, this great empire was the outcome of the most intense sort of religious revival, and its detailed consideration is therefore left for a later chapter which treats of the development of religious sects. It is enough to say here that after its power had spread from inland Arabia throughout the greater part of the peninsula and had assumed such proportions as to threaten the Turkish empire, it was crushed by foreign invaders and its capital at Deraiya utterly destroyed. But the triumph of the Turk was short. Ibrahim Pasha, the conqueror of the Arabs, soon withdrew, and by 1824 the capital was rebuilt at Riyadh, not far from its old site, and the Wahabi state reëstablished. Its power, however, remained merely nominal, and for the next seventy-five years Arabian history is a barren record of tribal fights, assassinations and stagnation.

About the middle of the century in Hail, an oasis to the north of Riyadh, a man called Ibn Rashid appeared. At

first he was an officer under the reëstablished Wahabi government. Later he became independent, and all northern Arabia followed him. For many years his was the brightest star in the Arabian firmament. From this time on there was great rivalry between Hail, the capital of Jebel Shammar in the north, ruled by the Rashid family, and Riyadh, the capital of Nejd in the south, ruled by the Saoud family. The northern star was in the ascendent for fifty years, up to 1901 when Ibn Saoud, the present ruler of Nejd, appeared on the scene. It is not necessary to enter into the intricacies of the situation created by this intense rivalry. For a time the Saoud dynasty was in eclipse and the father of the present *Emir,* with his growing sons, lived in exile in the domain of Sheikh Mubarak of Kuwait rather than submit to the authority of the Rashid house.

Finally twenty-two years ago, in 1901, there appeared in Riyadh, the capital of the Wahabis, a far greater man than Ibn Rashid. Indeed it may be questioned whether since the days of the Prophet himself there has appeared such a commander of the hearts of the Arabs as this man, Abdul Aziz bin Feisul bin Saoud, or more briefly Ibn Saoud. He readily gained control of the Wahabi emirate of Nejd, of which he was the rightful hereditary ruler, and already he has extended his dominion over the whole of inland Arabia. In twenty years he has driven the Turks out of Hasa and Katif on the Persian Gulf and deposed the Rashid family in Hail. He has conquered parts of the Pirate Coast and Asir. Still young after all these exploits, no doubt he hopes eventually to reign over an empire as great as that of his forefathers. If present events are an indication, he seems destined to unite practically the whole of

Arabia. He is followed with a loyalty that is beyond description, and stories of his justice and power form a new chapter in present-day "Arabian Nights."

This exceptional chief commands the admiration and the loyalty of his subjects great and small to a surprising degree. He has a number of brothers, all of whom appear to have no other ambition than to stand back of him and assist him in any way that they can. The rank and file of his armies idolize him. They are never tired of singing his praises. They love to tell of the long, terrible marches that they have made under his leadership in times past and are anxious to make again, when men dropped from their camels utterly worn out with fatigue and lack of sleep. They tell of his marvelous military exploits, an especial favorite being the battle in the neighborhood of Hasa, when he came from Riyadh, a five-day journey for fast caravans, in a day and a half to turn defeat into victory by his personal presence. His usual method when attacking an enemy, it is said, was to arrest all in the capital who came from that district, start with his army at such a pace that a messenger could hardly overtake them, and striking his enemy by surprise rout him utterly. If these stories sometimes need a grain of salt, it is to be remembered that a man who can lead three hundred desert Arabs against a walled city and drive out two regiments of Turkish soldiers, a man who can unite the warring tribes of Arabia as they have hardly been united since the days of Mohammed himself and who can administer his country so well that property has trebled in value, is a real leader. He is more than that. He is one of the world's born kings.

The logical climax of twenty years' success came last year in a long and exhausting campaign to conquer Hail.

The whole of inland Arabia was dried up by two years' drought. Horses and camels died by hundreds. The men in Hail took advantage of the official fast month of Ramadhan to get two caravans of supplies into the city. But in spite of the drought, in spite of the desperate lack of transport, in spite of the financial drain that nearly bankrupted the kingdom, the Arabs under Ibn Saoud held on and the city eventually fell.

Ibn Saoud won more prestige by his treatment of the captured city than by his military power in taking it. Rice was brought in and distributed free to the starving people. No looting was allowed. The Shiahs were summoned as a body to the royal presence and came terrified, fearing extermination as a heterodox sect. They were most courteously treated, given Ibn Saoud's personal assurance of protection, and each furnished with an official document sealed with the Great Chief's personal seal. They were guaranteed that as long as they remained law-abiding citizens, the whole power of the government would protect their lives and their property. The entire population was convinced that the change of government was for the best, and Ibn Saoud attached hearts to himself in a way almost incredible, so that even in far-off Mesopotamia men began to wonder whether this man Ibn Saoud might not make a good king for that distracted country.

However, Ibn Saoud, who has captured the imagination of the Arabs as has no one for decades and centuries, has plenty of secret enemies. The Arab is too consistent an individualist to endure even his rule without chafing. A few years ago two desert Arabs came into the Bahrein Hospital professing to be Ibn Saoud's men. Further-

more they told no falsehoods, for they were Ibn Saoud's men, by necessity if not by choice. Bahrein is very hostile to Ibn Saoud and his ambitions, and as the Arab puts it, "In the Bahrein bazaar, Ibn Saoud is killed every month." One of the frequent rumors of his death was heard while these men were in the hospital, and to every one's great surprise they were much elated over the news. When questioned they replied after looking around in every direction to be sure no one was listening, "Praise the Lord, now if God wills, he is dead! Why since that man has ruled, no one has raided an enemy and no one has stolen so much as a chicken. Nothing to do but stay at home like women." It was obvious that to them life without its usual amusements was scarcely worth living. Not many are equally frank, but doubtless there are many whose secret feelings are very similar.

As a leader Ibn Saoud possesses an extraordinary ability to inspire loyalty in the men he chooses for his lieutenants. Thus even in districts far removed from the inland capital he is able to put into operation the same sort of government that has been so successful in Riyadh. Ibn Sualim is the governor of Katif, a district north of Hasa on the Persian Gulf. He can be harsh at times and offenders fear him exceedingly. When he returned to his beloved city of Riyadh for a visit after an absence of several years, he begged the Great Chief to let him stay at home and not send him back to Katif. He actually broke down and wept in his ruler's presence as he thought of leaving again his much loved city and the open desert that is a part of every inland Arab's life. But when his chief told him that there was no one else to send, he returned without a murmur, and he is there to-

day, serving the Great Chief with a loyalty that knows no bounds and ruling with a benevolence that has made him the father to all his people.

But Ibn Saoud's chief lieutenant and the most powerful of all the rulers of eastern Arabia is Ibn Jelouee, governor of Hasa, a man in his way as remarkable as the great chieftain himself. His devotion to Ibn Saoud and his pitiless justice are proverbial over all that country. Three years ago I visited Hofuf, the capital of Hasa, when Ibn Saoud was in the city. The first thing to be done in entering a strange Arab city is to go and present official compliments to the ruling sheikh. Naturally under the circumstances we called first on Ibn Saoud. He was in a small room with Ibn Jelouee as his only companion. Ibn Saoud was seated on an ordinary settee such as grace Arab reception rooms everywhere. He invited me to come and sit next to him, quite after the usual custom for an honored guest. But Ibn Jelouee was not on that settee. He sat on the floor across the room. Nothing would induce him to sit in the place of honor next to his chief, although he quite expected me to do so; and that cold pitiless face was fairly transfigured by the love and loyalty that shone out of it.

In the days of Turkish rule before the occupation of Hasa by Ibn Saoud and his Wahabi forces from inland Arabia, there was an unbroken series of inefficient and corrupt governors who ruled over this oasis district, which has a population of about 100,000. When Ibn Jelouee was appointed ten years ago, the local conditions bordered on anarchy. Bedouins plundered the province at will and even entered the capital city of Hofuf itself. The community was divided into cliques and divisions; robbery and murder were frequent.

One of Ibn Jelouee's early acts was to dismiss the rich men and merchants who attended his reception hall in great numbers. "We want no one here," he explained, "except on business. I am anxious to form no friendships which may interfere with my rendering impartial judgment between rich and poor." This man has no salary, simply the upkeep of his establishment. His throne is a settee of crude local manufacture and is innocent of upholstery. A small plain cushion is its only comfort. His clothes are not immaculate, nor are they elaborate. Why a man should trouble about such things is a mystery to the Governor. His sense of duty is magnificent. He left his family to come to Hasa and occupy his present position. Since his appointment in 1914 he has hardly spent a day outside the city limits except once on an errand to Oqair and once when his own chief came on an official visit and Ibn Jelouee met him and accompanied him through the city gates as a token of affectionate loyalty. He would be surprised to have his procedure described as unusual devotion to duty. It would not occur to him to act in any other way. When I asked him, he would not admit that he was lonesome for his home city of Riyadh, or even that he missed his children. Nevertheless, when I told him what a fine little boy his son was and how the Great Chief, Ibn Saoud, enjoyed having the manly youngster sit up next to him on the royal settee, the face of the terrible governor lit up with an expression that told a far truer story than did his stoical tongue.

This man rules with a rod of iron. In the early days of his governorship he hardly ever arose from his settee in the judgment hall without some culprit's being led off for flogging or decapitation. He was utterly pitiless, and the hardened Bedouins of the desert spoke to me of his

deeds in hushed voices. The tribes which had made the life of Hasa miserable were invited to submit and when they refused, they were driven out of their patrimony to wander in the desert and find a home elsewhere. His absolute and arbitrary power was well illustrated when a caravan of Bedouins from the desert, on leaving the Hasa oasis, insulted and beat a villager whom they met who declined to accede to their wishes in some trifle. This incident happened in the early days before it had been demonstrated which was the stronger, the lawless instinct of the desert which had proved too much for the Turks or the will of the new governor who was determined to rule the country and protect every well-behaved citizen. The caravan was pursued and brought back to the capital city. Goods and camels were confiscated and the men shut up in a large empty courtyard. The Governor sent out to the gardens for a supply of green date sticks, and the men of that unfortunate caravan were taken one at a time, stripped and tied to stakes and whipped until, bleeding and pulpy, they lapsed into unconsciousness. The women of the caravan were allowed to witness the proceedings through cracks in the doors and filled the air with their shrieks and cries for mercy. They tore their hair and clothes and threw dust into the air in a frenzy of terror and rage as they saw their husbands and brothers and sons beaten almost to death. When adequate punishment had been administered, each unconscious man was passed out to the care of his family. After this episode a new and wholesome respect for constituted authority settled down on the nomad community.

No ruler in all Arabia next to the Great Chief himself has so gained the good will of the Arabs as has this stern

and impartial governor of Hasa. They are very fond of telling how he once entertained a complaint from an ignorant villager whose cow a party of boys out on a hunting expedition had shot and killed. The villager did not know the name of the offender but had noted him at the time. A careful description of the party made it possible to gather the entire number before the Governor. The villager then, on being asked whether he could identify the guilty boy, pointed him out with no trouble and learned to his horror that the culprit was Ibn Jelouee's own son. He started to apologize profusely but was not allowed to continue.

"Did you do this?" the boy was sternly asked.

"Yes, I did it."

The boy had a very fine mare, a recent gift from his father, and this was ordered brought. "Would you," asked Ibn Jelouee with the utmost courtesy, "be willing to regard this mare as an adequate compensation for the loss of your cow?"

The mare was a magnificent animal, much more valuable than the cow that had been killed. "Certainly," replied the villager. "She is worth many times the value of that cow, but I hope you will excuse me from taking her. If I had had the least idea who the offender was, I should never have entered a complaint under any circumstances."

"No doubt," replied Ibn Jelouee with a smile, "that is true, but nevertheless you will not be excused from taking the mare. The boy must in addition apologize to you most unqualifiedly, and if you will allow that to settle the matter, I shall be sincerely indebted to you." So the boy apologized, and the villager led off the mare. The small boy's heart was almost broken at the loss of his beau-

tiful mare, but it was not until sometime later that Ibn Jelouee bought the mare back for him, and then at a price of a thousand *riyals,* a sum sufficient to make the villager independently wealthy for the rest of his life.

Ibn Jelouee's name is one to conjure with over the whole of eastern Arabia. His ferocity in disposing of offenders and rebels is a proverb. Yet such power is entirely consistent with an astonishing independence of outlook and action on the part of his subjects. One night in his public reception room I listened to a free-for-all argument between a Bedouin of the desert and this terrible governor as to some occurrence a few years in the past. Ibn Jelouee received a letter while we were all sitting there, with news in it of an engagement between Ibn Saoud and his enemies. There had been a victory for the Great Chief, and in announcing the good news the Governor added a few comments recalling the fact that in that same neighborhood a certain tribe had been unfaithful to Ibn Saoud a few years before. One of the unkempt Bedouins present belonged to the tribe in question, and he promptly took up the cudgels in its defense. A Westerner never ceases to marvel at what he sees in the East. Here without doubt was the most feared man in all Arabia, in whose hands rested the power of life and death over thousands of men, a man who whipped criminals to death whenever he thought the public good demanded it, a man whose pitiless severity toward rebellious Bedouins made those hardened fanatics talk of him in lowered, almost terrified voices; and this man was engaging in a spirited argument before all and sundry with an ordinary Bedouin of the desert over a trivial point in recent Arabian history. No one else appeared to regard

the circumstance as surprising, least of all Ibn Jelouee himself. The argument lasted perhaps five minutes and in the end the Governor had the best of it. He ended with a semi-apologetic explanation to his Bedouin guest that he simply wanted the truth understood, otherwise he would not have argued him down. In this attitude, as well as in his exercise of almost unlimited authority, Ibn Jelouee is the embodiment of an ideal Arab ruler devoted to the interests of his chief and to those of the community he rules.

This Wahabi state whose workings we have discussed above is simply the time-tested Arab system of tribal government writ large. The qualities that have enabled Ibn Saoud to win the loyal support of the greater part of central and eastern Arabia are the same qualities that are admired in the local sheikhs throughout the peninsula and the governmental functions that Ibn Jelouee exercises with such despatch from his judgment seat in Hofuf are the same functions that devolve upon the local sheikh.

The Arab system of government thus depends absolutely on the sheikh. Since it is a one-man administration, if he fails everything fails. Not every man has in him the material for a responsibility of this sort and, as might be expected, it is the strong men who gravitate into such positions. The first requisite is unusual physical courage. No coward can last long in such a post. Every Arab sheikh stands in frequent danger of assassination, and the nerve which lets men sleep peacefully when danger fills the whole atmosphere is absolutely essential. He must have, as well, a large amount of moral courage and be ready to lead in deciding the various questions that come up. He may ask advice and usually he

does, but the responsibility of leading into untried paths and attempting dangerous and even unpopular things rests upon him.

To his physical and moral bravery it is essential that a certain amount of personal magnetism be added. Ibn Jelouee of Hasa is a brave man, both physically and morally. He can face danger and adverse public opinion with indifference. Some day he will face death with equal composure. But Ibn Jelouee could never be a great sheikh in Arabia. He lacks every element of personal magnetism. On principle he excludes congenial companionship from his reception room and there is no one, outside of his family at least, to whom any other than his cold business aspect is presented. He is feared by everybody and the poorer sections of the community revere him as a father, but no one loves him. He lives in an atmosphere of cold isolation, the loneliest man, I sometimes think, in all Arabia, sustained by his sense of duty and devotion to his chief, but without a warm friend in the world.

A man such as this makes an excellent lieutenant, but he cannot be a great sheikh. A sheikh must lead, must command an intense devotion on the part of his followers. A man can hardly be a great sheikh unless his followers welcome the chance of dying for him. Not every chief in Arabia is cast in this mold, but the great ones are. The difference between Mubarak of Kuwait and Ibn Saoud of Riyadh is just this difference. Mubarak, the former sheikh of Kuwait, was a shrewd man and a very able ruler. The justice and strength of his government in Kuwait were renowned all up and down the Gulf, but no one loved him. His dominion never extended beyond the territory that was naturally tributary to Kuwait. He





THE SHEIKH OF KUWAIT

was an ally of the British and their friendship was invaluable to him. It is doubtful if, with his lack of personal magnetism, he could have maintained himself as the head of a tribe of desert nomads.

To be a good Arab ruler it is also necessary to have an unquestioning faith in the completeness and perfection of the system followed. In this particular Ibn Jelouee is a more complete embodiment of the Arab ideal than Ibn Saoud himself. It takes a certain amount of stupidity to be an ideal administrator. The man who is constantly studying other systems and seeing the flaws in his own will not make a success of governing an Arab tribe. The Persian has a far brighter and more alert mind than the Arab. In any department of thought that could be named he outclasses the Arab hopelessly. Wherever the two live together, however, it is the Arab who rules, even though he constitutes only a small percentage of the population. There is a reason for this fact. The Persian's very capacity for mental gymnastics disqualifies him for the task. The Arab, on the other hand, is possessed of a divine and perfect governmental system. It is written in the Koran. Western infidels who differ from it are fools and blind, and he is not interested in their follies. As a result he administers the country on the lines laid down in his system with great efficiency. Justice is dealt out with a hand that is as hard as iron but at the same time as flexible as rubber. Public order is preserved, the poor are protected from the rapacity of the rich, relations are maintained with neighboring tribes. Peace reigns, freedom is assured for every well-behaved citizen, and offenders are terrified into submission by such red-handed justice as no western conscience would tolerate. The result is a peace and contentment to which we in the

West hardly attain. Your Persian, on the other hand, will discuss entertainingly the relative merits of the English and American parliamentary systems while anarchy prevails throughout his district.

The superficial observer who sees all this exercise of authority will conclude that there is little or nothing in the Arab system of government except an unlimited monarchy and that all democratic sentiments have been ruthlessly sacrificed. On the surface there is no more complete despotism in the world. The sheikh's power is unlimited, and he uses it unhesitatingly as the whim may strike him. He is a czar.

No mistake could be more complete than this hasty conclusion. To understand how far from the truth this conception is, and how exceedingly effective the checks and balances of Arab government are, it is necessary to remember some of the characteristics of Arab life. In the first place, in Arabia as elsewhere in the East, human life is exceedingly cheap. The fact that he has killed one or twenty fellow human beings will not, I venture to say, keep the average Arab awake for a quarter of an hour, or indeed for a quarter of a minute. The second characteristic of the life and mind of the Arab that is significant in this connection is his extreme independence. No foreign Power has ever dominated the Arab. Ibrahim Pasha, a hundred years ago, invaded Arabia and maintained a shadow of power in Riyadh, but his term of power was short and it was the land and not the people that submitted to him. Only occasionally in the history of the peninsula has the Arab been willing to give up enough of his tribal independence to make possible any national unity. The normal condition is one of chaotic, never-ending intertribal war.

It is true that the sheikh wields the power of life and death over this community of freedom and individualism. It also wields the power of life and death over him. The tribesmen expect a strong-handed and efficient rule. They expect public order to be maintained. They expect the poor to be protected by the sheikh from the rapacity of the rich. They expect relations with neighbors to be maintained. If these things are not done, if public order is not maintained and there are murders and robberies in the tribe, if the poor are exploited because the sheikh is too weak to prevent it, if tribal boundaries are transgressed by neighboring tribes, there arises within the tribe a faction of discontented men led by some one whom they desire as ruler in the place of the sheikh who is making such a failure of things. If disorder continues and oppression by the rich and powerful increases, this faction grows, and once a fair majority of the tribe have become passively sympathetic, the ruling sheikh is assassinated and the leader of the faction takes his place. The tribe accepts the new ruler precisely as it did his predecessor. It demands of him just what it demanded of the other sheikh. If he is able to fill his new post well, he will be followed with all the enthusiasm and devotion that he can ask. If he fails, his tenure of office will be short and he will be assassinated as his predecessor was. The Arab system is not a despotism at all. It is a one-man administration of the community, with the most effective form of recall that has ever been devised, and the Arab sheikh, with all his unrestrained power, is probably the most sensitive and responsive to the popular will of any ruler in the world.

The Arab has thus not only an excellent governmental system, with extraordinarily efficient checks and balances,

but a very precise conception of the functions of that government. The first function of the government, or as the Arab would say, of the sheikh, is the preservation of public order. The life and person of every tribesman must be protected in every legitimate activity, that is to say in all activities which do not infringe on the rights and interests of other citizens. Not long ago some of the religious fanatics of the interior beat a Jewish merchant who was living in the city of Hofuf. These men had their camels confiscated and were drastically punished. There is no individual in the world so obnoxious to the Moslem as a Jew, but as a peaceable citizen he was entitled to the protection of the ruler, and he received it. The greater part of the population in Hasa are Shiahs. Shiahs as a class are only less objectionable than Jews to orthodox Mohammedans, but they must be protected nevertheless. No desert fanatic is allowed to molest them. To the weak in general, the sheikh is expected to give his especial attention, to see that their rights are scrupulously preserved.

Not only life and person but also property must be protected. Outside their own community the sheikh and the tribe have the ethics of pirates. Anything they can take is theirs. Within the tribe, however, or within the city, it is one of the ruler's major duties to see that every property holder is secured in the possession and enjoyment of his property against all comers whatsoever. The very rich men, if such exist in a tribe, are perhaps not so carefully protected as those who have less. There are two reasons for this fact. In the first place they are better able to take care of themselves. In the second place, although anxious to protect all from outside marauders, the sheikh is sometimes severely tempted by

such a mass of easily seizable wealth, especially when his own exchequer is badly depleted. However, with this possible exception, the function of protecting private property is exceedingly well performed by a good sheikh. I have traveled in Arabia in a caravan where one of the camels carried forty thousand *rupees*. This sum was part of the revenue of Hasa and was bound for Riyadh. This is a journey of five days through the empty desert, but there was no guard accompanying the money nor was the least secrecy observed regarding it. I myself helped to load that money on the camel's back repeatedly. An ordinary Bedouin camel-man took it from Hasa with a letter stating its amount. He delivered them both five days later in Riyadh and received for his work a moderate pay. No one except the western stranger was even surprised at transporting money in that manner.

The task of maintaining public order is far easier in the desert within the limits of a single tribe than in a large oasis city. The ruler of an oasis is appointed by the chief under whose control the oasis is, and he exercises all the powers of a local sheikh. Inefficiency on his part would probably result in his removal from above before he was assassinated by his constituents. His life is therefore perhaps safer than that of a desert sheikh, but there are many things which make his task much the more difficult of the two.

The first difficulty is that in these cities, where there is a large artisan and merchant community and where the population is almost entirely of a settled character, tribal solidarity and tribal loyalty tend to disappear. Loyalty is not so obviously essential to the community life; and what is more, the population includes men of diverse origins attracted to the city because of the opportunity to make

money or perhaps to study at the feet of some noted religious teacher. There is almost no community spirit, and thus the function of the ruler is at once broadened and made more difficult. He becomes of necessity a good deal of a czar, and it is significant that almost always such a ruler is brought in from outside. In that atmosphere a member of the community, being at the same time a member of one or the other of the local cliques, cannot be trusted to administer unbiased justice. An outsider is brought in who is the father and judge of them all.

Divisions in such a community are likely to be first of all along religious lines. Included in the population there will be both Shiahs and Sunnis, between whom there is practically no intercourse at all except in the most formal business way. Their religious ideas are as far apart as the poles, and each group regards the other as little or no better than infidels. I have been warmly assured many times that as a Christian I was far more acceptable to the speaker than his differing and heretical Moslem compatriots. Rioting breaks out between these two communities at the least provocation. Murder is not infrequent, once the hand of the ruler weakens. In such a community the task of the ruler is no easy one. The matter is made more difficult if Jews and Christians are to be found in the city. Outrages against them are frequent, and it requires all the wisdom and power that such a ruler possesses to maintain public order under such circumstances.

Racial divisions are to be found in such a community as well. There are likely to be a number of Persians and possibly some Baluchs. Quite certainly there will be a large number of negroes, some slave and some

free. These all live together without trouble, and it must be admitted that public order is less disturbed by the mixture of races than it would tend to be with us under the same circumstances.

The divisions that make the most trouble in such a community are the economic divisions. Men of great wealth live in these oases; at least their wealth is great judged by local standards, and it seems such a natural and justifiable thing for the poor to rob the rich that the governor of an oasis city is never free from concern on this point. The first sign of a weakening rule is not the outbreak of race or religious rioting but the increase of robberies and of murders that have robbery as their motive. It is astonishing how free from these the great oasis communities are. In the days of Sheikh Mubarak of Kuwait years went by without a single robbery and Hasa under Ibn Jelouee could probably show a better record still. Success in this regard is the sign of a good ruler, and the first criticism of a governor who is failing to govern properly is quite certain to be the statement that under his hand robbery and murder are beginning to appear in his district or tribe.

In most oasis communities, as for instance in the province of Hasa under Ibn Jelouee, there is the utmost freedom of assemblage and of speech. No well-behaved citizen appears to be under any constraint whatever. In the untroubled freedom of life and association and movement no European or American city could surpass these Arab communities. This freedom, of course, would not cover propaganda against the government or the promulgation of new religious ideas. Change of religion the Mohammedan looks

upon much as we do upon treason, and the offense is punished in the same way.

Public order is thus maintained with a degree of success that is remarkable, and it is worth a moment's time to notice the methods that the Arab ruler uses to attain so conspicuous a success. Much has been written of the extreme brutality of the punishments meted out to offenders. The sheikh's success depends only to a very small degree upon this. The first essential feature of the Arab method is its speed. Possibly the same day that a theft is committed the hand of the thief will be cut off. No time is wasted in legal formalities. Witnesses are brought in, briefly examined, judgment is rendered and promptly carried out. There is no legal red tape. There is no appeal. On the basis of the available data a judgment is passed which, whether accurate or not, is at least prompt, and the connection between infraction and punishment is so obvious that the lesson is missed by no one. A man robs a caravan and probably in less than twenty-four hours his decapitated body will be lying in the dust of the public bazaar as an object lesson for the entire community.

Moreover, justice in Arabia is remarkably accurate. The Arab sheikh takes into account the previous record of the man under trial. He listens carefully to the witnesses, asks them questions and then renders judgment with an instinct that at times is almost uncanny. It certainly does not often happen in Arabia that an innocent man is punished. The number of witnesses examined seems small and there is no opportunity for a careful analysis of the evidence for and against the man on trial such as we allow in our courts. Nevertheless, when the sheikh passes judgment, his accuracy is surprising.

When to this combination of prompt and accurate detection of offenders is added unimaginably brutal punishment, the deterrent effect on the Arab mind becomes very great indeed. It is safe to say that the memory of that decapitated body in the dust of the Hofuf bazaar will save many a caravan from being plundered, just as the memory of the bleeding backs of unconscious tribesmen has kept uncounted townsmen from insult and mistreatment at the hands of the Bedouin visitors in Hasa.

In every decision, also, the sheikh has the community good in mind and not merely individual justice. A criminal decapitated in private would be just as severely punished, but by leaving the headless body out all day in the dusty market for inspection the public is educated. I saw an example of this point on a visit to Hasa. A shopkeeper missed an article of some value from his shop and thinking of the few who had just been in, decided that it must have been carried away by his last visitor. He hunted the man up at once and found him with the article in his hands. On being charged with the theft, the culprit claimed to have bought the article from a third Arab, whom he pointed out to the policeman arresting him. All three were promptly taken before the Governor, but the third party was dismissed with apologies by Ibn Jelouee without three sentences of investigation. This was not simply because the Governor's instinct correctly guessed his innocence. It was also the ruler's desire to demonstrate to thieves that such a subterfuge would do them no good and need not be tried again.

Methods are more complicated in the oasis centers than in the desert. The sheikh of a desert tribe settles practically every dispute himself and judges every criminal,

but that is not the case in the oasis city. There the ruler is advised by a council that amounts to a cabinet, and he may make very considerable use of this aid. In Hasa Ibn Jelouee has turned over to his subordinates nearly the whole of the local administration of the place, confining his own activities to the larger affairs of general policy and relations with the Bedouin tribes of the vicinity. A large place comes to be filled in these oasis communities by the *kadi,* or religious judge. This man settles the cases that come under the religious law. These are all under the governor's authority originally, but since he is not a legal expert, he refers a certain number of them on; and if the *kadi* is a good man and the ruler feels that the people's interests are safe in his hands, practically every such case is referred to him. There are a large number of cases of this sort, as for instance all cases involving marriage and divorce and disputes regarding inheritance. Criminal cases may sometimes be referred to the *kadi,* but most of these the ruler disposes of himself.

There remains to be mentioned the unofficial arbitrator, who fills a large function both in the tribes and in the oasis communities. Two parties to a dispute often submit their case to such an arbitrator and abide by his decision. Naturally it is a man's reputation for fair-mindedness and keen analysis that brings these cases to him. There is no fee connected with such service, but a man's prestige in the community is greatly enhanced by being asked to act as arbitrator in this way and he comes in the course of time to be looked on as one of the leading citizens. Mohammed Effendi in Hasa is a notable example. I have rarely attended his evening reception when one or two such cases were not brought before him for adjudication. His honesty is a proverb over all eastern Arabia.

Perhaps ninety per cent of the small disputes of the community are settled by this method of arbitration.

Public order is maintained with a very small police force. When I last visited Hasa, the entire military force of this oasis community of perhaps 100,000 amounted to one hundred men under Ibn Jelouee's personal direction. These men are carefully supervised and no oppression on their part is permitted. While we were there, an altercation occurred between a policeman and a local merchant in the bazaar, and in the fracas the policeman's cap was torn. He came to register a complaint with Ibn Jelouee but was received with little favor. The Governor listened to his story and knew that if any difference had arisen the fault was without doubt with the policeman, for no ordinary citizen would insult or mistreat one of the police force without cause. "Here is a *rupee* for a new cap," said the Governor, "and listen—if you are found in trouble with a villager again, you will be beaten to insensibility as a punishment."

Next to maintaining public order the sheikh looks upon it as his main business to protect the weak and poor from the rich and strong. Throughout the East, the rapacity of the rich is notorious. To corner some necessity of life and grow rich while the poor starve, is a common practice of the rich Brahmins in India. The interests of the poor are not altogether safe in the hands of the rich even in our country, and the capacity of the lower class for self-defense is far less in the Orient than it is with us. The Arab, being a very poor business man at the best, and lacking ability to coöperate on his own account, falls an easy prey to such manipulation of capital. If it were not for the protection afforded by his ruler, his lot would be a hard one. To his inability to coöperate, he

adds a reckless lack of thrift which leads him to spend his income, however large, cheerfully when it comes in, with no regard at all for tomorrow when he may face absolute want. The natural results are seen in the pitiful condition of the men who do the work in the gardens of Mesopotamia and the pearl divers of Bahrein. A trifle further down in the scale of misery is the slave community of Dibai.

The greatest development of the avarice of the rich is seen where the introduction of western ideas of the sacredness of life and property has permitted its unchecked growth. Under the primitive Arab government it is not allowed to flourish unchecked. There are various methods by which the ruler tries to counteract the rapacity of the rich. Various articles of food have their price fixed and any exactions over the given figure are rigorously punished. Within limits this is a useful measure. I once sat in Mubarak's judgment hall in Kuwait when the leading merchant of the city was publicly rebuked and ordered to reduce his freight rates on dates from Basra to Kuwait. As a permanent method, however, it is a failure, for it simply means that a particular industry languishes. In Bahrein, for instance, the price of fish has been arbitrarily fixed at a point far below their real value. The result is not cheap fish but no fish at all. It is easy to prevent men from charging more than a certain price for fish, but even an Arab sheikh cannot make men fish if they have no adequate inducement for doing so.

A more effective means of keeping the balance somewhat even is the cancellation of oppressive contracts, especially when unforeseen circumstances arise, as for instance in Katif when the date crop has been a partial or complete failure. The original contract to deliver to the

owner of the garden a specified number of packages of dates would ruin the gardener, and the Sheikh of Katif will dictate a modification of the terms in the cultivator's favor. To be sure, the owner will usually modify them without the submission of the matter to the local sheikh, but it is his fear that the sheikh will revise them drastically that makes him willing to revise them moderately. In the coast cities there is a steady stream of disputes between the pearl divers and their captains. I once sat in the judgment hall in Hasa and saw a pearl-diving captain dismissed with some asperity by Ibn Jelouee with the decision against him. From a remark of the Governor's it was evident that technically this captain was in the right, but the Governor considered that the scales needed a little weighting that day in favor of the poor. Even the treatment of the slaves in Dibai is mitigated by the fact that the Sheikh frequently interferes in their favor when they invoke his protection.

In this connection the Arabs tell a story of Ibn Saoud, the great chief, on his first official visit to Katif after he had driven the Turks out of the district. After the fashion of the Orient this was the occasion for complaints to be brought and differences to be straightened out. Into the great public reception room came a pearl-diving captain, dragging with him a diver who owed him money, with the old complaint that the poor man would not pay his debts. Ibn Saoud knew, as does every one in that part of the world, that the diving captains are utterly unscrupulous in their methods and outrageous in their demands. The whole system is one that Ibn Saoud hates. So he called for the account book and it was brought. The page with this particular diver's entries was found. "Is this the entire account? How much is the total?"

The total was announced. Then Ibn Saoud took the book and wrote down over the page of entries. "Concerning the indebtedness of Khalid ibn Abdullah, the diver, to Abdul Karim, the captain, he is excused from paying the first and the last and the entire amount of it," and put his seal upon the whole. It was a healthy lesson, which doubtless had a salutary effect on that district at least.

However, the efficiency of the Arab system in protecting the poor from the rapacity of the rich does not depend fundamentally on such palliations as these. It rests rather in the nature of that government and in the character of the community itself. Where life is cheap and assassination a trifle, popular opinion is supreme. The community wants the poor protected from the rapacious rich. This feeling is inevitable, for most of the people are poor. The ruler knows that his tenure of office, and quite possibly even his life, depend upon his success at this point. Moreover, there is another element that exerts a large influence. The sheikh is chronically short of funds and would welcome an opportunity of killing some rich man and confiscating his property. The only reason why he does not do so is that the community would not tolerate it. Such an assassination unprovoked by adequate cause would be likely to cost the sheikh his seat and his life. But if one of these same rich men is so oppressive and hard in his business dealings that he becomes unpopular, the situation is entirely changed. If his date gardeners are treated with rigor so that they have poor food and wretched clothing and have to live in houses scarcely fit for animals, if beggars coming to him for food are turned away with curses, if debtors are sold out without pity when their debts fall due, then the commu-

nity comes to long for the death of this rich man; and the way being thus prepared, the sheikh will attend to the rest promptly.

The rich man knows all this, and he sees to it that his popularity sinks to no such low level. Beggars coming to his castle are liberally fed. Debtors who are unable to meet their obligations on time are treated with great leniency and given almost indefinite extensions. The date gardener has no difficulty in securing a reduction in his contract if the year has been bad. The rich Arab of inland Arabia is surprisingly lenient and benevolent. It is not fair to him personally to attribute this attitude to a conscious currying of favor with the community. He has always acted thus, and his father before him. It is the very exceptional man who does otherwise, for the spirit of kindliness and benevolence has become a tradition of the class. But once let that class be exposed to the blessings of modern civilization, where life and property are safe, and this tradition withers and dies like a flower in the desert.

The sheikh is therefore an important factor in maintaining the economic status of the community, especially in the oases, where the primitive conditions of desert life are complicated by the existence of social classes. Sheikhs and their retinue themselves constitute the first privileged class of Arab society. They have the power of public taxation, and there is no complaint if they spend large sums upon their wives and upon their favorites. That much is expected. Among the Arabs a surprising amount of this sort of extortion is patiently endured, provided the functions of government are well performed. With the cultivation of oases two additional privileged classes appear, the owners of land and the possessors of

capital. It is not an accident nor an arbitrary and unjust decree that makes oasis land private property. It takes no little business ability to make a profit from the cultivation of land under the adverse conditions due to scarcity of water. Without the use of its natural resources the community would inevitably sink from the level of comfort that the oasis attains to the level of want and distress that prevails among the desert tribes. Private ownership is the only possible way to secure the cultivation of these gardens. The prosperity and progress of the community also depend upon the appearance of a certain amount of free capital. Without it no transportation of goods and almost no exchange would be possible, except perhaps between immediate neighbors. But the price that the community pays for the services of private property and of capital depends absolutely on the temper of the community. The community is not under the control of these privileged classes; rather the will of the privileged classes is pitted against the will of the community and the amount of tribute extorted is simply the measure of the balance reached between those two contending forces. In such a situation the Arab expects his sheikh to maintain the equilibrium and as a matter of fact the sheikh usually succeeds very well.

From the standpoint of pure theory, any one of these three privileged classes might perhaps be expected to absorb all the benefits of settled agricultural life and the life of the common citizen in the oasis be expected to remain at the level of Bedouin life in the desert. According to Henry George, rents should absorb all the benefits of the changed manner of life, and according to Karl Marx, the extortions of capital should take it all, whereas the man with his attention fixed on the possibilities of

government monopolies might expect that particular class to secure all of it. The fact is that the three privileged classes together do not get half of it. Universally the lot of the average citizen in the oasis is vastly above the desert level. Universally also, the three privileged classes gain a preëminence over their fellows and a certain amount of comfort and luxury. Just where the balance is struck depends upon the temper of the community. The timid and fearful pearl-diving community of the coast suffers almost anything with little complaint. The inland Bedouin tribes, on the other hand, allow far less extortion as a price for a much better government than the pearl divers, and pay less for the proper development of their agricultural resources than the inhabitants of oases near the coast.

The sheikh has one other major function and that is the maintaining of foreign relations. Boundaries of grazing grounds are always indeterminate in a country where there are no surveyors and no settled central government. Everybody wants all he can get, and as soon as a tribe thinks itself strong enough to do so, it will try to encroach on the domains of its neighbors. Within the tribe the sheikh fosters the spirit of absolute coöperation and loyalty. Everybody is equal and the interests of the tribe are supreme. Outside of tribal boundaries the tribe is a pirate, and inasmuch as it is surrounded by pirates, the maintaining of relations with other tribes comes to be an important function. Raids on other tribes must be planned and adequate defense against enemies organized.

These raids cause singularly little personal resentment. I inquired as to this matter once from a Bedouin who had come to Kuwait for surgical treatment made necessary by

the bullet of a raider. I remarked that surely the man who shot him must have been a very bad man. The patient did not catch the humor of the question and hastened to the defense of his enemy against this slander. "Oh no," he said, "I do not suppose that he was a bad man. I tried," and here he grinned a fine broad grin, "I tried to shoot him but did not have good luck." This raiding is the national game of the Arabs and baseball in America does not furnish better sport. Without this excitement they feel lost, and there is much dissatisfaction with Ibn Saoud's government because of his stern suppression of this activity.

There remains to be discussed the collection of taxes, in Arabia, as everywhere in the world, an important government function. The Arab chief wandering with his tribe in the desert has no large income. He possesses many camels and goats with probably at least a few horses. He receives a moderate tax in kind from all members of the tribe. This is supposed to be a religious tax, the *zakat,* and was originally intended for the support of the poor. The sheikh of course supports the poor and so he collects and administers this tax. Just how much of it is so spent is never investigated. It forms a considerable part of the external revenue of the sheikh. The less important sheikhs receive little in this way and are dependent for almost all their income on their flocks and herds. Some of them are wretchedly poor.

The sheikhs who control oasis cities are in a much better case. There is a tax on all the gardens, which must run up to between five and ten per cent of their produce. This is sometimes levied as a flat rate per date tree. It is difficult to arrive at its percentage rate in such cases. As administered in Hasa at the present time, it appears to be



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A BEDOUIN SHEIKH

easily borne. It amounts to not over two *rupees* each year per tree. As far as an outsider can learn, now that one ruler controls most of the central part of the peninsula, the taxes are all sent to him. Former chiefs must be content with the income from their private property. It is an easy matter to collect taxes in the oases. Ibn Saoud's lieutenants appear to be very efficient in their bookkeeping; I have watched dozens come into the treasurer's office in Hofuf, the capital of Hasa, and have never yet seen a man delayed five minutes to find out the exact amount he owed the state. The collection of taxes from the Bedouins is a more difficult matter, and the man who collects these taxes has some surprising experiences. They are sent in, however, and with much less difficulty now than formerly, since Ibn Saoud's name and power have grown to be so great.

Besides the direct taxes, the sheikhs near the coast have long since learned that import and export duties offer an easy way of adding to their incomes. The customs of a coast port are sold to the highest bidder, an evil system that may quite possibly have been copied from the Turks but in any case is universal now. The sheikh is thus relieved of the responsibility of administering the customs himself, and when he supervises the matter with an iron hand, as Ibn Saoud does at present, the system works very well. In the days of the Turks the customs of Hasa, Katif and the adjacent coast were sold as a whole for the sum of seventy thousand *rupees* a year. Now after ten years of good government under Ibn Saoud, they were sold last year for seven hundred thousand.

The original idea in Arabia seems to have been that the sheikh should collect no taxes but live from the income

of his own property. All over the peninsula, however, they have so far departed from this as to collect the *zakat* and the customs and administer the money more or less for their own purposes. But the original idea has never been lost sight of, and every sheikh gains a large part of his income from his own productive properties. The late Sheikh Mubarak of Kuwait was enormously wealthy in date gardens around Fao. His lavish expenditures were made possible by the income he received from these gardens, for he received very little from his citizens except a small export and import duty. Sheikh Said of Dibai does not collect any customs and he has no income at all except from his private holdings. Ibn Saoud, who has an income from his customs of seven hundred thousand *rupees,* or over two hundred thousand dollars, probably collects two hundred thousand *rupees* from other sources of taxation, and his followers tell me that from his various gardens and other private properties he receives an equal amount. Arabs estimate his annual income at not far from two million *rupees,* apart from a subsidy of seventy-five thousand *rupees* a month which he has been receiving from the British Government. Although this is a trifle compared with western standards, it makes him the outstanding figure in Arabia, and it is by means of this money that he maintains his reputation for hospitality. As everywhere else in the world, government would collapse if the official income were stopped.

There are some things which an Arab sheikh does not do. He takes no interest in the promotion of public health. It would not occur to him that such an activity came within the functions of a ruler. Also he takes no part in the supervision of religious practices. He would

interfere, no doubt, if it were reported that some one was teaching heretical doctrines, but granted a normal course of affairs, he has no religious function except to pray in the mosque like any other citizen. Religious instruction and observances are in the hands of religious teachers.

The sheikh also makes no effort to direct the economic life of the community aside from the modification of contracts and occasional fixing of prices mentioned above. He is glad to see evidences of prosperity but does not imagine that he has any function either to stimulate or to guide economic development. The idea that he should take the initiative in public improvements, such as the building of a wharf, would seem to him a curious and insane notion. In the late days of the Turkish occupation of Katif, the town was governed by a local Arab who was at the same time a Turkish official. This man, *Hadji* Mansur Pasha, conceived the idea of moving the bazaar to a new location close to the sea and dredging a canal up to the head of the bazaar, so that the sail boats upon which the community depends for its trade could be brought in at all times, either at high or low tide and be unloaded in the bazaar itself. It was a splendid idea, and would have contributed greatly to the town's prosperity. When the new bazaar was about half finished and the canal half dredged, Mansur Pasha died, and a little later the place was taken by the Arabs and the Turks driven out. Katif has been well governed since then. Public order has been preserved, and the misgovernment of the Turks is over. Property is worth at least twice as much as it was before. But I have never heard the least suggestion of finishing the harbor improvements that Mansur Pasha began. Abdur Rahman bin Sualim, the governor of Katif, is one of the best rulers of all Arabia,

but I am sure that if any one suggested to him the idea of completing that splendid project he would be astonished. Governments are not supposed to do that sort of thing. A private effort to do this he would welcome and give it every encouragement, but a governor spends his time on other and more important tasks. He is there to govern, and that means to preserve public order, hold the balance of equality among all citizens of the community and organize its relations and contacts with other tribes. Further than that he recognizes no responsibility whatever, and no ruler in the world has less sympathy with the socialists' idea that the government should be the instrument of the coöperative economic life of the community.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RULE OF THE TURK

FOR many years a large number of the Arabs were governed by the Turks. Before the war, Mesopotamia, Hejaz, Yemen and Hasa were all Turkish territory, and Turkey at times laid claim to the entire peninsula. The Turks formed a very small minority of the population in all of the districts they controlled. They were little more than a governing caste. Even in Mesopotamia where the number of Turkish inhabitants was the largest, they amounted to only a small percentage of the population. The rampant individualism of the Arab tribes and the consequent impossibility of their working and fighting together made possible the subjugation of large areas by this far distant nation, which produced no better fighters then they and certainly not nearly so good governors and administrators.

The theory of Turkish government is not greatly different from that of the Arabs. The function of the government is the preservation of public order, the protection of the poor from the rich and the maintenance of outside relationships. These things are to be done by a governor who is a deputy of his overlord, the Sultan, and who is guided and to some extent limited by a codified law. There is also a sort of official local council upon which all the different sections of the population are represented. The framework of the government is thus

quite good, certainly no worse than the Arab system and probably better. The codified law, by universal testimony, is excellent, although the fact that no provision is made for capital punishment would seem to be a weakness. Fifteen years imprisonment is the utmost punishment allowed. As far as Arabia is concerned, however, this limitation was more theoretical than actual. A resolute governor might execute a dozen criminals a day, and that in bizarre and terrible ways. His lack of a code punishment did not hinder him.

However, in a country such as Arabia a codified law is a very mixed blessing. Every consideration of speed and effectiveness calls for the Arab plan of an unhampered one-man government. The matter is made worse by the appearance of a flock of lawyers. They are perhaps indispensable if we must work with a codified law, but in Arabia it is impossible to regard them as anything but a detriment. They obstruct the process of justice, and as in India, they are a great factor in stimulating the appetite of the people for lawsuits. Associated with them are whole rolls of red tape, innumerable delays about witnesses, and technicalities of every sort.

Courts such as these become nests of bribery, and it is impossible to get any business done with such officials except by means of bribes. It is a pleasure, however, to record that in the early days of the Committee of Union and Progress Constantinople was more or less free from this evil. In 1912 when I applied for a medical certificate, there was not the slightest odor of corruption in any bureau with which I had any business and not the smallest gratuity was asked by any official either high or low. If it is necessary to record the fact that this change did not spread into the provinces, but

instead the old standards were brought back from the provinces to Constantinople, it is still permissible to believe that Constantinople's condition then is a promise of what the future may some day hold for the whole of Turkey.

Yet no less than with Arabs themselves, the success of a Turkish administration depends upon the ruler. The government, in fact, is the ruler. The success or failure of a Turkish administration depends very little upon the perfection of the law, and very little upon the ability of subordinates. Everything depends upon the governor himself.

Few greater surprises could be possible to a Westerner than to meet one of the men whom Constantinople was accustomed to send out to these difficult posts. Our western conception is that of a burly, roughly dressed barbarian, his hands dripping with blood and his whole manner that of savage and bloodthirsty cruelty, the picture, in short, that we have gained from the cartoons in our newspapers and the somewhat ignorant and unreasonable denunciation of the Turk that is common in our press. The difference between the picture and the facts is ludicrous. The Turkish official is a man of considerable education and extraordinary polish. The average American missionary is far behind him in his acquaintance with modern languages. It is somewhat of an eye opener to a raw Westerner to have one of these men courteously try to converse, first in Turkish, then in French and then in German, all beautifully at command. It is usually necessary for the missionary to converse in English or Arabic, probably the latter, although the official, being Turkish, dislikes to talk in Arabic, which has always been to him the tongue of a

subject race. A Frenchman himself cannot surpass the polished and courteous manner of these Turks. I have traveled a number of times with minor Turkish officials third class in a river steamer, and in this unkempt and Bohemian way we lived together for some days. When his port is reached, however, there is a marvelous transformation. The Turkish official goes ashore immaculately shaved and dressed. Even the creases of his clothes are in order. He might have stepped out of some salon in Paris. I have marveled at this transformation many times and envied such an ability at costume changing.

The Turkish officials who ruled in Arabia and may possibly rule there again were men of education and polish, and many of them in addition men of great ability. Nevertheless, as rulers of an alien people they failed and failed lamentably. Worse government than the Turkish it would be difficult to imagine, at least as far as it has been seen in Arabia, and I think that most Westerners who have come into contact with these men have at times stopped to wonder why their great abilities produced no better result. The reasons are not far to seek. The method of appointment is almost sufficient of itself to make good government impossible. The positions are auctioned off to the highest bidder. To a western mind such a method of selection would seem absolutely fatal and the prospect for good government utterly hopeless. As a matter of fact, however, the men so secured are often men of great ability, excellently fitted for the work. Good government in the East does not require incorruptible and unselfish men for its realization; if it did, the case would be hopeless. Fortunately, a strong-handed freebooter may make a very ca-

pable and efficient governor. Such a man, by reducing to one the number of pirates preying upon the public, will afford a much better government than a weak man of better intentions; for the public is far better off plundered by one predatory governor than plundered by fifty predatory merchants and land-owners.

If there could have been some way to insure that each appointee would keep his position for five years, the character of the Turkish rule in Arabia might have been a hundred per cent better. In Hasa, for instance, where the Turks ruled for nearly fifty years and where they failed to leave behind them any significant traces except the cordial hatred of the whole community, this briefness of term was the main difficulty. The average tenure of office must have been far under two years, and frequently for months the position would remain vacant, the province being administered in the meantime by some deputy. The ablest and best intentioned administrator in the world can hardly expect to accomplish anything worth while in such a short time.

To judge by the testimony of the local Arabs, who certainly were not prejudiced in their favor, many of these rulers were capable men and also to some extent men of good intentions. Many of them were anxious to add to their prestige and reputation by making a conspicuous success of their administrations. Turkish civilization and culture might have made a distinct impression on the Arab to his great benefit if some of them had been allowed a reasonable time to work out their policies. The plan already mentioned for a relocation of the Katif bazaar and a dredging of the Katif harbor was a typical Turkish plan. Unfortunately its ending is typically Turkish also. The pestilent method of selling

such offices to the highest bidder is fatal to all possibilities of good government, especially if the term of service is to be only a year or a year and a half. In the nature of the case the appointee can devote his time to little else than reimbursing himself and if possible adding some slight profit on the transaction. With a reasonably long term of office there is opportunity for this particular motive to disappear to some extent and for a government official's normal ambition to make a success of his job to come to the surface. It goes without saying also that the intricacies of each local situation can scarcely be mastered in eighteen months, so that the formulation of any reasonably good and practicable program was impossible for these men even granted that they were actuated by an intense desire to rule for the good of the community.

To these reasons for failure must be added two other far more important even than they, namely that the rulers were usually neither honest nor efficient. With some exceptions the Turkish official looked upon his office as a means for gaining a livelihood or of amassing a fortune. Nothing could surpass the venality and corruption of the entire body of government servants, from the meanest scribe to the governor of the district. The Arabs have a story that once upon a time the citizens of a certain village decided that the local trade would be benefited by the construction of a bridge over a river which ran close to their town and cut off trade from one whole side of the country. They estimated that the bridge would cost four Turkish pounds, which amounts to something less than twenty dollars, and being unable to manage so great a sum themselves, they applied to

the local *mutasarrif* for that sum from government funds.

The *mutasarrif* after investigation approved the enterprise and sent the request up to the *vali* of the district. "The people of this village," he wrote, "desire that the government build them a bridge over the river and after investigation I cordially approve of the project. It will cost in the neighborhood of forty pounds and I take the liberty of expressing the warm hope that you will feel free to grant their request." The *vali,* on his part, examined the matter and approved it as something that would undoubtedly benefit that part of his province, so he passed the request on to Constantinople with his approbation. "The people of this town," he wrote, "have asked for a government appropriation of four hundred pounds for the construction of a bridge over the river which runs just outside of their village. This project has the cordial approval of the local *mutasarrif,* and I am happy to add that my own judgment coincides with his entirely. It is an improvement that should benefit a large region by improving its facilities for trade, and I take the liberty of expressing my earnest hope that it may receive your favorable consideration."

The project commended itself to the Constantinople authorities. Four hundred pounds were sent to the *vali,* who kept three hundred and sixty, sending forty to the *mutasarrif,* who kept thirty-six, remitting four pounds to the village council, who built the bridge; and everybody was happy. This story is doubtless pure fiction, but like much fiction in this world it is absolutely true.

Added to this venality so complete as to be almost sublime was an inefficiency apparently as profound as

the bottomless pit. The ordinary Turkish governor might have lined his own pockets at twice the rate he did and at the same time have cut the burdens of the people in two if he had possessed the least ability to administer the country efficiently. However great his education and however immaculate the polished surface which he presented to the outside world, efficiency was an unfathomed mystery to him. The Government House accounts in Hasa are said to have been kept, or rather left unkept, in the days of the Turks by a staff of clerks and copyists that numbered somewhere between twenty and fifty, according to differing local estimates. Mohammed Effendi now transacts this same business, magnified in volume many times under the rule of Ibn Saoud, with the help of two assistants. It is safe to estimate that men are delayed now in the transaction of their government business about a tenth as long as they used to be. Hasa is a particularly good example to quote on this point, for Mohammed Effendi officiated under both régimes.

The government administered by these Turkish officials was, however, not nearly so unpopular as we of the West might expect. It is the fashion now to curse the memory of the Turks in Hasa, but that is largely due to the fact that peculiar circumstances made their administration bear heavily on the common people in especially obvious ways. It was their failure to hold the local Bedouin tribes in check that has made their name anathema in that province. The Bedouins, thus given a more or less free hand, oppressed the townsmen cruelly. The actual administration of local affairs by the Turks is rarely mentioned and when mentioned it is often with praise. In Mesopotamia the attitude of the common people is

much more favorable to the old régime. In the days of the Turkish rule in that country it was the rich merchants, and especially the rich Jewish and Christian merchants, who felt the oppressive hand of the Turk as a heavy load. Even then the rank and file of the common people were more or less satisfied, and now that the Turk has been replaced by the efficient and honest Englishman, even the Christian minorities sigh for the return of Turkish rule.

This phenomenon, so astonishing to a western mind, has an explanation, like all other phenomena in this world, and the explanation is not simply that all the Arabs are fools, or as the Englishman would say, "silly asses." The explanation is to be found, first of all, in the constitution of Arab society and government. Even with all the modifications brought in by the Turks, of which perhaps the greatest was the introduction of codified law, the general sentiment of the community was still Arabic and the fundamental framework of society Arabic also. The *mutasarrif* or *vali* was still in much the same position as an Arab sheikh; he held his office by virtue of the fact that the great mass of the people were more or less satisfied with him. It is true that it would have taken a somewhat larger percentage of discontent to bring about the assassination of a Turkish ruler than of an Arab sheikh, but the difference is, I think, less than might be imagined. The result was, of course, that the Turk, however much he might oppress and plunder the rich, was anxious to please the poor. It is easy for us to say that the price would be passed on to the public eventually, but the public did not recognize that fact, and their opinion rested on what they were able to see.

Furthermore the statement itself is not altogether true; not all of the cost was passed on to the public. The ruler regarded it as one of his functions to protect the poor from the rich, and however much of a freebooter he was himself, he often managed to perform this function quite efficiently. In a society where the ruler can arbitrarily seize half of a man's property overnight and the man have no redress, it is obvious that much can be done by a determined ruler to keep the distribution of wealth more or less equal. It is obvious, too, especially if the property holder is a Jew, that he will groan exceedingly under these conditions, but it is not at all certain that the people will sympathize with him. As a matter of fact, in Mesopotamia they did not. They applauded the ruler.

It goes without saying that with a codified law, and with all the other modifications of the Arab system introduced by the Turks, this system could not function so efficiently as it does with the Arabs. The date gardeners of Mesopotamia were not so well protected from the rapacity of the rich land-owners as they are under Arab government in the deserts of Central Arabia. Still the system did function somewhat, and with the artisan classes and the semi-nomadic tribes of Mesopotamia it functioned better by far than with the date gardeners.

There are many examples that might be quoted of men who were thus popular with the common people in Mesopotamia in the old days, although cordially hated by the rich. Sayyid Talib was a freebooter of the freebooters. He levied on the rich merchants and the Jewish money lenders and any one else that had money to be levied upon. He was not an official nor had he the

shadow of a legal right to any of this money. He would send to a merchant the statement that before sundown he hoped to receive from him a gift of a thousand pounds and he always received it. His right to it was precisely the right of pirates the world over. This man's character was known to every one. He lived in a great castle a few miles down the river from Basra. Because the government was not strong enough to arrest and execute him, he lived thus for years and even represented his district in the Constantinople Parliament for a time. His character was no secret, but he used to resent its being advertised, and a newspaper editor who published some remarks on the subject was beaten nearly to death in the castle where he was carried by Sayyid Talib's slaves. He was, however, extremely generous toward the poor and fed many beggars; and the people of the entire district looked upon this notorious freebooter as one of their best friends and protectors.

The western visitor studies the resources of the country and sees that they are not exploited for half their possibilities. This he regards as the one unanswerable evidence that the Turkish government was exceedingly bad. A new government which will utilize these resources is what is needed. The Arab who has lived in the country all his life has a different point of view. The resources have always been unexploited as they are now, and he does not know whether they have possibilities or not. He wants the government that allows him the best food to eat and the most nearly decent clothes to wear, that makes it possible for him by effort and economy to live in a house that will at least keep out the sun and the rain. He wants more than this. He wants the liberty to go where he pleases without inter-

ference, and the permission to be whatever sort of Mohammedan he desires, and last but not least, he wants no annoying interference with his liberty for sanitary and police purposes. Now the Turkish ruler was able to supply these wants pretty well. The rich were oppressed but they had plenty left. The poor had the impression, at least, of being cared for. They had enough to eat and wear. They were not annoyed by the restrictions of civilization. The Turkish rule therefore was popular, far more popular with the common people than the British régime which has succeeded it.

It would be a great mistake, however, to conclude from the popularity of the Turkish officials that their rule was an ideal one for the country. Under their administration trade languished, production remained at a minimum, and although reliable statistics regarding the rule of the Turks in Arab provinces do not exist, doubtless the population largely diminished also. The reason why this effect is not more obvious to the modern observer is, of course, that trade and production and population reached an irreducible minimum beyond which chaotic governmental and social conditions could not reduce them and thereafter remained stationary.

An additional bad result of the Turkish rule in Arab countries was the accentuation of divisions and cliques. It was a recognized policy of the Turks to stimulate division and discord and thus make the government of belligerent provinces somewhat easier. In Hasa, in the Turkish days, the Sunnis and Shiahs were never in harmony. The weaker inhabitants were oppressed by the stronger. The Bedouins from outside came in and looted almost without hindrance. The Turkish empire has had a most indigestible mixture of races to contend

with, but even the admittedly great difficulties of her task do not excuse her utter failure. Although she has had hundreds of years of opportunity to exert her abilities in harmonizing the different races which make up her population, they are now more discordant than ever, and we had during the war the hideous spectacle of the dominant race deliberately attempting to exterminate one of the insubordinate subject races in cold blood, certainly a sufficient confession of failure.

The Sabaeans or fire-worshippers of Mesopotamia furnish a notable example of Turkish ineptitude in facing this difficult problem of assimilating alien races. The Sabaeans are the remnants of the pre-Islamic population of Mesopotamia who refused to become Moslems in the days of the Moslem conquest. They have been, and so far as their diminished numbers permit they still are, a most valuable asset to the country. They are by far the best artisans in the Arab world. Some of their silver work surpasses the best that India can offer. This community, which is absolutely peaceable and knows nothing of the arts of war, has been harried and persecuted until now there remains only the smallest fraction of their original numbers. They now number less than ten thousand, if their own estimates can be trusted, and their complete disappearance is apparently a matter of only a short time.

Another indictment that must be brought against the Turk in the Arab world is the fact that he failed utterly as a civilizing force. This was his fault and not simply his misfortune, as might be argued of an Arab ruler who has never seen the vision of the government as a force working to uplift society. In Hasa sanitation was not improved even in the most elementary way. No

improved types of public buildings were introduced. By easy acquiescence in Bedouin crimes and robberies trade was strangled rather than stimulated. No effort was made to establish schools. To this last statement there was one exception; an unfinished school building, which Ibn Saoud used later as a stable, was one of the prizes that fell to him when he captured the capital city of Hofuf. Least of all was any effort made under Turkish rule to develop the people along the lines of self-government. The pity of all this evidence of failure is that the Turks were possessed of a culture that had in it elements of great value for the Arabs. They resembled the Arabs in many ways and were infinitely better fitted, I think, to be the transmitters of western civilization to the Arabs than are the English and Indians, through whom the stream is coming now. Their failure was complete, and it was one of the great failures of history.

So we have the surprising result that in 1914 upon the conquest of Hasa by the Wahabis of inland Arabia, a people who were without the smallest acquaintance with western civilization or culture, the whole country breathed a sigh of relief. The Wahabis had no culture to bring. They were in no position to transmit western civilization to the gardeners. They did, however, bring an excellent government. Law and order were restored, and every form of disorder was put down with a heavy hand. Every law-abiding citizen was protected in the pursuit of his peaceful activities. In a few years property was rated at three times its former value and dates sold in the open market for three times their former price. The customs receipts have risen to ten times their former figure. There was not the slightest effort at uplift in

all this. It was simply the result of a just and strong government. No new roads were built, but the old ones were kept free from robbery and pillage. Trade was not stimulated, but it was made safe. Sanitation was not improved, but at least the death rate from assassination disappeared. The Turk has departed from Arabia and Mesopotamia for the present. His first opportunity he wasted in a colossal failure. If the course of events brings him back, may he be given wisdom and leadership to do a better job next time.

CHAPTER IX

THE BRITISH RÉGIME

A SMALL part of Arabia has been for a long time under some degree of administration by Great Britain. The coast cities of eastern Arabia have been under British influence and the island archipelago of Bahrein has been a British protectorate. Aden, in the extreme south, is also a British protectorate. Since the war Mesopotamia has been administered by Great Britain, at first under a mandate and now by special treaty arrangement; and from sometime before the war the British held valuable oil lands in the near-by Arabic speaking part of Persia. In addition subsidies have been paid to various Arab chiefs. It is possible that British influence may be withdrawn from a part of this area, but there is little likelihood of Great Britain's withdrawing from her oil wells in Persia. She will, too, almost certainly remain in Basra and its adjacent area, for that territory she will always need to guarantee the safety of India. Whatever happens, we are likely to have a large British area to reckon with in all future consideration of Arabia and the Arabs.

In governing these territories Great Britain follows the plan that has proved so successful in her other colonial possessions. In many respects her government is oriental, and on that account it has been the one outstanding success among the colonial adventures of mod-

ern times. Everything centers about the governing official. The men sent to Arabia are usually Indian Army officers who have been transferred to civil work on the basis of success in a competitive examination. These appointees are frequently familiar with a number of oriental languages and have had an excellent preparation for their work. The majority are the products of the best secondary schools in England, the so-called "public schools." Their fundamental training is usually classical and exceedingly thorough, and there can be no question of the excellent administrators that these men make. A certain number of them are Cambridge and Oxford graduates.

With almost never an exception, these administrators are men of clean life and of incorruptible uprightness in all their official and private dealings with the Arabs. With their knowledge of oriental languages and their special preparation they almost invariably combine a rare degree of common sense and a refreshing ability to cut through red tape when it gets in the way. Their industry is proverbial, and it is unfortunately a common thing to see them invalided home, the victims of overwork. They work undividedly for the public good, and each man hopes by fostering the development of his community to gain recognition and advancement in the service. If it is impossible sometimes to see the wisdom of a particular policy, it never has been possible in all my experience to doubt for a moment the good intention back of it.

There is a strange uniformity in the political outlook of these men, both in their attitude to local political thought and in their views on politics at home in England. They are taken from the governing class in Eng-

land and are invariably Tories. I once met one who enjoyed the discussion of socialism with me, but he was unique. There is indeed a curious similarity between the Arab administrator's mind and that of the civil servant who administers the British colonies. Both have the same blind confidence in the divine perfection of the system followed and the same surprised impatience at the least question of its fundamental correctness. I suggested once to an unusually able British administrator that this was one of the large reasons for the success of the British as colonizers all over the world, and to my surprise he agreed with me. "Cleverness," he averred, was fatal in a colonial administrator. As might be expected, the aspirations of the people for self-government are not cordially appreciated by these British officials and the noisy and superficial, albeit very sincere, patriotism of the Near East in recent years finds them cold. They govern for the good of the people; in this they are absolutely sincere, but their good intentions would be more warmly appreciated if they could be combined with a livelier sympathy for the aspirations of the better educated citizens of the governed areas.

The attitude of the people toward these rulers is in curious contrast to their attitude toward the Turks. The Turkish ruler is usually disliked by the rich and loved by the poor. The British ruler is loved by the rich and disliked by the poor. The fundamental difficulty, of course, is the same thing that makes our own rule unpopular in the Philippines. The rule is benevolent in purpose and efficient in administration, but the personal attitude of the ruling class is haughty and aloof. A distinct caste division is established and insisted upon with the ruler above and the ruled below. However

much it may reflect on the Arab's intellect, it remains true that he prefers a ruler as inefficient and corrupt as the Turk, who treats him essentially as an equal, to an efficient and honest and progressive ruler like the Briton who treats him as an inferior. Let us not be too hard on the foolish Arab. Doubtless New York and Chicago could be more efficiently ruled by a commission from Denmark, but who is prepared to say that such a suggestion would be welcomed.

The result is that, whether in Mesopotamia or in Bahrein, much criticism of the ruling Power is constantly heard. The good qualities of the administration are taken as a matter of course, and small irritating details are magnified. One might suppose that uprightness and efficiency were the rule in oriental governments and that the only contribution made by the British is these small irritations. Ridiculous and utterly false stories of the oppressive policies and acts of the local administrator are circulated. They are believed and enjoyed. Investigation will always show these reports to be false, and he is a foolish man who gives them a moment's attention. Even the Arabs who listen probably know them to be exaggerated. Nevertheless, the obvious popularity of such tales is a significant indication of the attitude of the Arab mind, and however long British rule persists in a given place, this attitude never seems to change.

Unfortunately there is always some basis for such stories. The best administrator on earth, working with Indian subordinates, cannot keep his establishment entirely free from bribery and corruption. His subordinates may even be guilty of worse than monetary excesses. Such things mean instant dismissal when discovered, but the Oriental is a subtle individual and dis-

covery sometimes takes a long time. Everything of this sort, usually trivial, sometimes important, is dressed up and elaborated for public consumption. Under a somewhat careless political agent, or one who has an excess of confidence in his subordinates, evils of all kinds develop like weeds in a wet summer.

The government is modeled after the Arabic pattern. The local political agent in a protected port such as Bahrein conceals his hand carefully and interferes in local affairs only on the rarest occasions. Nevertheless, if necessity arises, he is an absolute czar. The local sheikh has control over local affairs. To any ordinary eye his power and position are in no way different from those of an Arab sheikh anywhere. His revenues are untouched. Indeed, as the result of a little advice and supervision on the part of the political agent, they are usually greatly increased. The local judge, or *kadi,* who has jurisdiction in cases involving the religious law, is also much used, and in general local affairs are left alone unless some grave emergency compels a minimum of interference.

In such a community foreigners are under the direct protection of the political agent, and their offenses are tried in court by him. Where a subject of the local sheikh is involved in a dispute with a foreign citizen, the court is a mixed one composed of representatives from each side. The system works well, and the functions of government as the Orient understands them are well performed. Public order is well preserved. For this work a local police force is organized and paid by the sheikh, but its organization and discipline usually receive some attention from the political agent. The poor are protected from the rapacity of the rich mod-

erately well. The freer hand the political agent has, the better this function is performed. Relations with outside tribes are well looked after, and it is unheard of for a tribe under British protection to be imposed upon by outsiders.

The greatest defect of the system as far as local administration is concerned is the maintenance in office of incompetent sheikhs. Under the native Arab system such men are promptly disposed of, and whatever his defects the ruler is likely to be the strongest man available. When the power of the British is established, a treaty is concluded with the ruling sheikh and not infrequently the agreement extends to his son. Thus it happens that the power of the British is sometimes used to maintain in office a man who is unfit for his task, and the resulting local administration compares most unfavorably with the unmodified system of the desert. Both Bahrein and Muscat have been recently governed by sheikhs who were quite unequal to their tasks. The British, having concluded treaties with them, adhered honorably to the spirit and letter of the agreement and thus prolonged a rule that every well wisher of the communities would have been glad to see terminated.

The British political agent in Arabia is not simply anxious to preserve public order; he endeavors steadily to stimulate progress and develop the country. The trade of the district receives his first attention. Roads are cleared; oppressive customs barriers are modified; new lines of commerce are investigated. We had a political agent in Bahrein once who investigated the possibility of introducing additional varieties of game birds into the island. The economic foundations of life in Arabia

are very inadequate and the Englishman is undoubtedly right in putting his best attention and effort behind any enterprise that promises to broaden them. In Mesopotamia, as recounted in a previous chapter, such efforts have gone much further than elsewhere. Railroads have been built, harbor facilities installed and irrigation works begun. Mesopotamia offers a splendid field for this sort of effort, and under proper management it should develop into one of the richest areas of its size in the world.

Next to the development of trade the British administrator directs his attention toward sanitation and health. The coast districts are full of malaria and there is much to be done in the way of draining marsh lands and oiling the undrainable sites. Free medical service for the public is available at practically every port where a political officer is stationed. In Mesopotamia the government's efforts in this direction have been magnificent, and the civil hospitals in Basra and Baghdad do work that will compare favorably with anything we have at home. I have never seen finer X-Ray work in my life than that done by Dr. Norman in Baghdad. All over the Gulf, too, as in Mesopotamia, a careful quarantine system has been put into operation, and in spite of an almost complete lack of sympathy and coöperation on the part of the people, the incidence of plague has been reduced about seventy-five per cent and cholera has almost disappeared. Where public opinion makes it possible, modern education is introduced. Much progress has been made along this line in Mesopotamia. If there is sometimes a rather ludicrously large and impressive external showing upon an astonishingly meager foundation, it is to be remembered that we are dealing with

the Orient where the same is true of nearly everything. Furthermore this is the day of beginnings, and the man who demands perfection is simply stupid. Not only are there many government schools, but there has been a very generous policy of government assistance for any private schools that are willing to operate under government inspection and supervision. The best and most thorough work in the country has been done by mission schools aided in this way.

Perhaps the finest evidence of the good intentions of the British rulers is in their steady effort to put a certain part of the local administration on to the Arab's shoulders. The mixed courts, where cases are tried by the Arabs and the political agent sitting together, constitute a beginning. Later, as now in Bahrein, a municipality is organized. A small tax is put upon each house, ranging (in our money) from six cents monthly on the poorest houses to two dollars on the houses of the rich. The foreign residents pay this tax as well as the Arabs, and the money secured serves to keep the place clean and gradually to improve the streets. Certain thoroughfares have been straightened and widened so that now an automobile can travel almost anywhere; an offensive drain from the sheikh's castle to the sea has been covered in and the city is so clean that it is scarcely recognizable. All this work is carried on by the Arabs themselves with a minimum of English supervision.

The introduction of British influence is thus an unquestioned blessing as far as material development is concerned. Its eventual outcome, of course, no man can tell. It is perhaps safe to say that the system along the Gulf, where British supervision is confined to coast cities and is usually more a matter of advice and personal in-

fluence than of coercion, will finally be found to be a more valuable contribution than the detailed and efficient government of Mesopotamia. There is no doubt as to the benefits of British occupation. The question is whether an occupation that does not eventually commend itself to the rank and file of the people but remains instead permanently an alien affair, will be a benefit in the long run. To judge by the example of India, such an occupation will never be wholeheartedly accepted by the inhabitants. Inevitably the feeling against it grows as the nation advances. Education, which is so generously introduced, becomes the major factor in causing this increased hostility. The better educated the subject race becomes, the more determined it is to achieve self-government. Perhaps it is not too much to say that because of this fact British dominion is destined to disappear eventually, and certainly nothing would do so much to make the present situation acceptable to the Arab as a frank and unqualified avowal of its temporary character.

CHAPTER X

GREAT EMPIRES OF ISLAM

FEW phenomena of modern times offer so fascinating and at the same time so puzzling a study as Mohammedanism. Its brilliant and kaleidoscopic political development has been the subject of books and treatises almost without number, for Mohammedanism burst on the world not as a religious movement simply but equally as a political development, and it resulted in the organization of one world empire after another. In the thirteen centuries of its history its growth has been astonishing.

The religious temperament of the Arab was much the same before the days of Mohammed as it is now, and in those days Arabia presented the surprising phenomenon of a Semitic people with the strongly religious mind that they have today following a loosely articulated system of polytheistic idolatry. It was inevitable that such a religion should give way to one better adapted to the needs of the people. Doubtless the unsatisfactory internal condition of Arabia politically and the disgrace of being partly under foreign domination intensified the desire for a change, but the religious genius of the race does much to explain the tremendous religious upheaval which came with the advent of Islam.

Mohammed, the founder of the new religion, had come into contact with Judaism and Christianity, both Semitic

in origin, and in common with many of the better men of his time had been greatly drawn to them. By nature Mohammed was a thoughtful man, and his first marriage to Khadijah made him well-to-do and gave him leisure to think. It is evident from the meager accounts which we have of him during this early period that he reflected much upon the unsatisfactory nature of the religion prevailing in Arabia and upon the vast superiority of other religions around him.

These meditations crystallized out of Mohammed's mind in a series of visions which, whatever their psychological nature, he undoubtedly believed to be revelations direct from God. Of the exact nature of these visitations we know little, and speculation regarding them has not been illuminating. Nevertheless we know the only important thing there is to be known about them. In them was born a religious system which was the best product of Mohammed's mind, and much more than that—it was the crystallization of the mind of a race. It is no detraction to say that the essence of Mohammed's greatness was that he expressed the best and most powerful thought of the Arab race. It was because his thinking and feeling were the thinking and feeling of a great race that he stands out as one of the great men of the world.

In view of the power of the system that Mohammed introduced, nothing but academic interest attaches to any investigation of his sincerity. He must have been sincere in any legitimate definition of that term. He received what he believed to be a revelation from God. His harshest critic does not claim that he was ever unfaithful to that revelation. In his prosperous days when loot was brought in in quantities, it was not wasted in

personal display or indulgence. To the end of his life, Mohammed devoted himself wholly to the propagation of the great truth which he believed himself divinely commissioned to give to men. That in his relations to women he exceeded its provisions is unquestioned. That he promulgated fictitious visions at times to bridge over difficult emergencies is obvious. But it is equally certain that he never lost his devotion to the propagation of his message. The character of the successors that Mohammed left behind him is evidence enough of his sincerity. Abu Bekr and Omar of themselves are sufficient to refute any idea of divided motives in Mohammed's life.

Unless we are prepared to assume something supernatural in Mohammed's own nature or in his relationship to God, which the writer certainly is not, the only fair way to estimate Mohammed's character and greatness is by comparison with other great Orientals. To spend time and effort in a detailed exposition of how his character falls short of Christ's reflects little credit upon our critical judgment as historians, and less still upon our knowledge and understanding of Christ. When we compare Mohammed with Alexander, whose dissipations killed him at thirty-three, with Persian monarchs like Xerxes, who impoverished their kingdoms by the extravagances of a sensual court, with the Caesars of Rome degraded by their wholesale immoralities and cruelties, with Akbar and Jehangir and the other Moguls of India, we realize that the temptations of lust and greed and treachery left him surprisingly clean. Certainly Mohammed was one of the greatest men the world has ever seen. Not one of the military heroes that we honor approaches him in permanent influence. Prob-

ably not six men in the whole history of the world have made such a mark on it as he.

Mohammed died in 632 A. D. in Medina. He had won some minor local military successes, and had succeeded in conquering Mecca. He had gained the allegiance of practically all the tribes of Arabia. But he accomplished something far more significant. He actually succeeded in instilling into the hearts of his followers his own faith in Mohammedanism as destined to rule the nations of the world and his own enthusiasm in forcing it upon them. He had even begun the organization of an expedition against the Byzantine power in Syria before he died.

Mohammed was succeeded by Abu Bekr, his father-in-law and one of his first converts. Abu Bekr ruled only two years but in that time he made a contribution to the political development of Islam second only to that of Mohammed himself. His first year was spent in subduing the tribes of Arabia, which seized this opportunity to assert their independence of Medina. Abu Bekr's devotion to the hopes and ambitions of his dead master saved the situation. Expeditions against the Byzantines in Syria and against the Persians in Mesopotamia were sent out, and the restless energy of the Arabs was given an outlet in foreign campaigns. The stubborn rebels at home became fanatical warriors abroad.

Abu Bekr died in 634 and was succeeded by Omar, who guided the tremendous energies of the awakened Arabs for the next ten years. From a military standpoint the history of this ten years reads like a page of fairy tales or a chapter from the "Thousand and One Nights." Mesopotamia was taken from the Persians and Syria from the Byzantines. The complete subjuga-

tion of Persia was begun. The great military figure of these campaigns was Khalid, a leader who deserves perhaps to rank with Hannibal, Alexander, Caesar and Napoleon. But the most surprising feature of these times is the fact that Khalid was ably seconded by a host of generals whose success was only less than his own. Campaign after campaign was undertaken and no odds seemed so great as to prevent success. Initial failures were always submerged in later successes, and everywhere the armies of Omar were victorious. At his death, Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, Assyria, Babylonia and the whole western half of Persia were completely conquered.

The energies of the Arabs as released in this movement seemed limitless. Omar was not primarily concerned in extending the empire. Before his death he became anxious rather to limit its spread, fearing that any further additions of territory would be a weakness. Omar was a great administrator. He organized the conquered territories on the basis of rugged justice. "By Allah," he said, "he that is weakest among you shall be in my sight the strongest, until I have vindicated for him his rights, but him that is strongest will I treat as the weakest until he complies with the laws." He introduced law and order into the rapidly growing and somewhat anarchic empire. He never left Medina during the entire ten years of his reign except to visit Syria for the purpose of better organizing its affairs. He was a stern puritan, and many are the stories of the simplicity of life that he insisted upon, even when the head of the greatest empire in the world.

Omar's is the brightest name among the first four caliphs, the rulers of what we may term the first Arabian empire. He was, however, not a great enough man to

revise the system under which he worked, and his organization of the empire was along the lines of orthodox Mohammedanism with all the hardship which that system visited upon conquered non-Mohammedan minorities. He paid the penalty of the system's imperfections. A Kufan workman stabbed him in the mosque in Medina and he died in 644.

Othman took his place, ruling twelve years, from 644 to 656. Conquests abroad continued. The ruler of Syria, Moawiya, in particular was an able and vigorous deputy and carried on unceasingly the campaign against the Byzantines throughout Asia Minor. This energetic governor finally succeeded in persuading the Caliph to allow him to build and equip a Mohammedan fleet which was the beginning of Mohammedan sea power and a tremendously effective weapon in his hands. But at home in Medina disintegration set in. Othman was a weak ruler. He belonged to one of the aristocratic houses of Mecca, and more and more of the positions of power and preferment went to those of like connections. The other elements in Medina became gradually more disaffected. The leaders of the opposition were the remaining companions of Mohammed, particularly Ali, Mohammed's son-in-law. They greatly resented seeing the lucrative and influential positions of the empire given to families who had been among the Prophet's bitter enemies in his early days and had only joined his standards after fortune had smiled upon him and it was easy and profitable to be one of his followers. The situation grew worse and worse. Abroad Othman's armies were victorious everywhere. Egypt was conquered. Moawiya's campaigns in Asia Minor were consistently successful. The conquest of eastern Persia was

completed; Khorasan was taken. The armies of the Caliph reached the Oxus and the Indus on the east, and from Egypt they went on till they reached the Atlantic on the west. But no army had been retained to guard the Caliph at home, and malcontents coming in from the provinces, partisans of the disaffected in Medina, murdered the venerable Caliph, now eighty years old, in his own house.

It is customary to reckon the caliphate as held by Ali, Mohammed's son-in-law, from 656 to 661, but it would be more correct to reckon this five years as a period of confusion during which there was no caliph. Ali was chosen by the elements of the opposition in Medina as Othman's successor and lived for five years after this election, but he never ruled the Mohammedan empire. Moawiya, the powerful governor of Syria, a cousin of the murdered Caliph, started for Medina with an army to punish the murderers. He offered to arbitrate the question of the succession with Ali, who agreed and then rejected the umpires' decision in Moawiya's favor. Ali's willingness to submit the matter to umpires cost him the adherence of his religious following, and he was murdered in 661, leaving Moawiya the ruler of the empire.

These circumstances gave rise to the division of the Mohammedan world into the Shiahs, or heretic partisans of Ali, and the Sunnis, or orthodox supporters of the caliphate, a division which has persisted to the present day. Followers of Ali insisted that the succession should be hereditary, descending first to Ali as Mohammed's son-in-law and after that to his descendants. Upon the death of Ali they proclaimed his son Hasan caliph, but Hasan came to terms with Moawiya, and died later at Medina. Some years afterward, when Yazid, son of

Moawiya, succeeded to the caliphate, this opposition party rallied to the cause of Hosain, the second son of Ali, whom they put forward as caliph. He was killed and his small forces practically wiped out in a battle at Kerbela in the month of Moharram, 680. In spite of the apparent failure of their cause the group later called Shiahs continued to believe that the first three caliphs, Abu Bekr, Omar, and Othman, as also the Omayyad and Abbasid dynasties that followed, were usurpers and that the true *imams* or successors to Mohammed (the Shiahs reject the term caliph) were first Ali, then Hasan, then Hosain, and then their descendants. This doctrine of the *imam,* or rightful ruler living in concealment, lent itself easily to the propagation of political rebellion. Throughout Mohammedan history, changes in political régime can frequently be traced to one or another of the Shiah sects. In this early period of their organization, however, the party which later came to be known as Shiahs submitted peacefully enough to the rule of Moawiya and his successors.

Moawiya did not govern the empire from Arabia as had the early caliphs, but set up his capital at Damascus, where he had lived as governor of Syria. Thus ended the first empire of Mohammedanism, the first political child of this tremendous religious movement. In twenty-nine years it had spread from the peninsula of Arabia until its victorious armies were sweeping everything before them from the Indus on the east to the Atlantic on the west. The whole of Asia Minor was being conquered. Syria and Mesopotamia, Egypt and Persia had been thoroughly incorporated into the empire.

The peninsula of Arabia, with its capital, Medina, now became a mere province in the great empire and a negli-

gible province at that. The new Caliph was a member of the Arab house of Omayya, whence the name of his dynasty as the Omayyad dynasty. He was a man of extraordinary energy and ability, and the dynasty that he founded lasted from 661 to 750, just under a hundred years. In this period the Mohammedan empire reached its greatest glory. Nothing that followed compared with this, the second Arabian empire. The dynasty was an Arab dynasty, and Syria, the seat of power in the empire, was racially as truly Arabic as the peninsula itself.

The great names of this hundred years are first that of Moawiya, the founder of the dynasty, who ruled from 661 to 680, Abdalmalik, who ruled from 685 to 705, Walid, who was caliph from 705 to 714, and Hisham, who ruled from 724 to 743. The finest qualities of the Arabs were shown in this caliphate. There was no coercion of the Christian minorities; they were merely taxed more heavily than the Moslems, the latter in theory paying no land tax at all. At one time the conversion of Christians to Mohammedanism was actually opposed because of the lessened public revenues that resulted. This inequality of taxation beween non-Moslem and Moslem and between Arabic and non-Arabic Moslems was one of the gravest weaknesses of the Omayyad Caliphate. The Arab is a splendid ruler, but he is peculiarly incapable of analyzing the system he works under, and so it was not until 740, after fatal damage had been done, that the Governor of Khorasan made land taxes equal for all landholders. If that change had come fifty years sooner, the Omayyad empire might have lasted centuries longer.

Perhaps nothing illustrates better the character of the Omayyads than the succession of governors who ruled Mesopotamia. Moawiya sent as governor Ziyad, a man

who had previously been a faithful partisan of Ali in rebellion against him. It took a long time to win Ziyad but eventually he became one of the strongest of Moawiya's lieutenants. A puritan in his religious devotion, he ruled Mesopotamia with the greatest vigor, and under him there was prosperity and justice and public order such as opened up a new epoch in that province. Ziyad died in 673 and Mesopotamia lapsed again into its old condition of chaos. Mesopotamia was the richest province of the whole empire and the source of its major revenues. It was also the seat of continual intrigue and unrest, for in Kufa and Basra and Kerbela were to be found descendants of the Prophet who considered that the caliphate should have descended to them. There were also descendants of the companions of Mohammed who had similar ambitions. Ibn Zobair was one of this latter class. He proclaimed himself caliph and it required many years' fighting to subdue him. The Caliph, Abdalmalik, finally entrusted this task to a man called Hajjaj bin Yusuf, and the task was so well performed that Hajjaj was presented with the governorship of the whole province of Mesopotamia, which gained thereby a governor whose abilities made him one of the outstanding men of the entire period.

Hajjaj was never caliph. He aspired apparently to nothing more than the governorship of the great province that had been entrusted to him. Nevertheless his is a greater name than that of most of the caliphs. Entering the hostile city of Kufa, then the capital of Mesopotamia, he ascended the pulpit of the great mosque on Friday noon in the place of the preacher of the day. He informed the seditious mob of hundreds that he was the new governor and that any man disloyally remaining at

home instead of supporting the Caliph's armies in the field would be beheaded. Single-handed he overawed the hostile crowd and all opposition ceased. Hajjaj was an illustration of the Arab's capacity for loyalty. He must have been much the sort of man that Ibn Jelouee of Hasa is today. Under his powerful administration offenders were dealt with in ways of unexampled ferocity. Laws were justly administered. The irrigation system of Mesopotamia was put in order. Lands were drained. The province under his governorship was prosperous and orderly. Hajjaj died in 714 and later one of his lieutenants, Khalid el Qasri, ruled Mesopotamia for fifteen years in much the same manner.

Through these provincial governors we are able to gain a valuable sidelight on the character of the Damascus Caliphate. None of the Omayyad Caliphs built himself a castle to live in. They remained, after elevation to the supreme office, still residing in their original villa. There was no development of court etiquette and cringing subservience. None of these Arab caliphs desired courtiers to kiss their feet and all, as the record shows, gave great attention to the selection of able subordinates. The court of these men was the court of simple and sometimes of austere Mohammedanism. Toward the end of the dynasty the morals and manners became somewhat more lax, but to the last they compared most favorably with those of Medina and were incomparably better than characterized the court that was later to rise in Baghdad.

Throughout this hundred years the conquests of Mohammedanism were constantly extended. The whole of North Africa was consolidated under Mohammedan rule. Spain was conquered, and the victorious march of the Caliph's armies into Europe was checked only on the

field of Tours in 732 when Hisham was caliph. There was unceasing warfare in Asia Minor, Armenia and Azerbaijan, and with the conquest of those countries most of that part of the world became Mohammedan. Nothing illustrates better the extraordinary energy that animated the Arabs throughout this dynasty than these tremendous campaigns. Under Moawiya, between 672 and 679 the capture of Constantinople was attempted every year. Later in 717, under Suleiman, one of the lesser Omayyad Caliphs, there was another tremendous effort to take the city. But probably the most successful of all the armies of the dynasty were those sent out by Hajjaj, the governor of Mesopotamia. Hajjaj learned the value of careful attention to equipment, and largely on this account his armies conquered Samarkand and Kabul and even Kashgar on the boundaries of China. The Makran coast was conquered, the Indus was passed and the whole of Sind fell into the Caliph's hands. The Indian king, Daher, ruler of Sind, was thoroughly beaten.

But with all its strength, before it was a hundred years old the dynasty had gone down. It was not because the ruling house was worn out, for the last ruler, Merwan II, was cast in the mold of Moawiya and Walid, but he battled against hopeless odds and subdued tremendous rebellions in Mesopotamia and Syria only to be overthrown himself by a greater rebellion in Khorasan, the eastern part of Persia. The dynasty was undermined and finally overthrown by unceasing propaganda carried on by the partisans of Ali, the Shiahs. Missionaries of this sect had spread over the whole empire, and their universal success in gaining the ear of the common people is an index of the mis-

rule and oppression that had crept into the Omayyad empire. Officials were corrupt, taxes were high and inequitably distributed. The people were greatly dissatisfied. The empire had grown to enormous proportions, and the distinctions made between Mohammedans of different origins rankled in the breasts of devotees who felt instinctively the democracy of the religious system which all Mohammedans alike professed.

The undermining and overthrow of the Omayyads were the work of Shiah agitators who supposed a man of their own choice, a descendant of Mohammed, would sit upon the throne. They were doomed to disappointment. Abul Abbas, a man who had no connection with the sacred line, with incredible adroitness seized the fruit of the Shiah labors. The new caliphate took its name from the founder and is known as the Abbasid dynasty. At first heretical in its religious views in order to hold the support of the Shiahs, the ruling house soon found it more profitable to return to the orthodox faith. Persian Shiah missionaries had caused the downfall of the Omayyads; it was a Persian from Khorasan who seized the throne, and a Persian empire that was thus set up. The new dynasty ruled from 750 to 1258, and for nearly all of this period its capital was in Baghdad. The history of this caliphate is a weary record of intrigue and assassination, immorality and hypocrisy, the typical annals, indeed, of an oriental court. Not a caliph in the entire five hundred years compares with the great names of the Arabian empire of the Omayyads. The brilliant names are those of the *grand viziers*, particularly the family of the Barmecides, who conducted the affairs of the huge unwieldly empire in the days of Mansur, Harun el Rashid and Mamun, the golden days

of Mohammedan learning and philosophy. Poets never weary of praising the extraordinary sagacity, benevolence and justice that characterized the rule of these men.

But the empire soon weakened. Its period of strength was hardly longer than that of its predecessors and only the absence of powerful foes enabled it to drag out a painful existence for four hundred years longer, then to perish miserably before the attack of the Mongol hordes from Central Asia. During this period the enormous empire gradually broke up into smaller fragments. Africa became more or less independent under the Aghlabites, who ruled first as vassals of the Baghdad Caliphs. Egypt became the seat of an independent and at times competing caliphate of the Shiah faith, that of the Fatimites. A sect closely allied with the Fatimites, the Carmathians, with headquarters at Katif, swept over Arabia in the tenth century. Their excesses were extreme. Twenty thousand pilgrims on their way to Mecca were massacred at once. Mecca itself was taken, and the Black Stone removed to Lahsa, or Hasa, in the eastern part of Arabia, then the residence of the Carmathian princes, where it remained for ten years. The Carmathians nearly wrecked the tottering caliphate and were only subdued by the utmost efforts. A little before their appearance a rebellion of negro slaves in Basra had taxed the slender resources of the caliphate for fourteen years before it was finally suppressed. This incredibly weak and corrupt pretense of a government was finally wiped out by the Mongols in 1258 when they captured Baghdad and laid waste the whole of Mesopotamia. The successor of the Abbasid Caliphs fled to Egypt, where he resided as a purely spiritual prince until the early part of the sixteenth century

when his functions were assumed by the Sultan of Turkey.

The third world empire produced by Mohammedanism is the Turkish, which may be considered as beginning in the early part of the thirteen hundreds and continuing to the present. It was a race of tremendous power that thus emerged from obscurity, and for a period of two hundred years, terminating in 1566 with the death of Suleiman the Magnificent, Turkey was the most powerful nation in the world. In the days of the Omayyad and Baghdad caliphs the Mohammedan campaign for the possession of Constantinople had been carried on intermittently, notably by Moawiya, Suleiman and Harun el Rashid. But it remained for the Turks actually to capture the city and turn it into a Mohammedan stronghold. It fell in 1453. Egypt was taken from the Mameluke Sultans in 1517, and the caliphate thus officially passed to the Ottoman Sultans. The whole Balkan Peninsula became Mohammedan. Both Belgrade and Budapest were conquered, and twice in the history of Turkey Vienna itself was besieged.

After the days of Suleiman the Magnificent, however, Turkish history is a wearisome story of oppression and profligacy and degeneration. A piece at a time, the empire was dismembered by more powerful neighbors. Turkey resembles the Baghdad Caliphate in this, that she now drags out a painful and corrupt existence, waiting for some powerful enemy to put an end to her wretched career.

These four political states have been especially mentioned because they are the lineal descendants of the government of Mohammed himself, but besides these there is an almost unlimited number of empires great and

small whose development is a part of the history of Mohammedanism. The Mogul empire of India is perhaps the greatest of these. The Omayyad dynasty in Spain is another, as also the Carmathian kingdom in Arabia mentioned above, and the present state of Afghanistan. The list could be extended almost indefinitely. Their histories are so similar that a single chart could be plotted of their development, just as a physician charts the progress of a patient. All begin with a tremendous outburst of energy, which manifests itself principally in the spread of religion by military conquest but also to no small extent in the progress of civilization and culture. In each this period is a short one. In the first Arab state that period of tremendous energy and splendid political and intellectual growth lasted less than twenty-five years. In the great Arab empire of the Omayyads it lasted nearly a hundred, in the Persian empire whose capital was at Baghdad, possibly a hundred and fifty, and in the Turkish empire about three hundred years. In all cases this short hectic period of energetic progress was followed by an unrelieved night of stagnation and corruption, of utter decay of all the institutions of society and the gradual disappearance of every advanced element from the existing civilization.

It is not commonly realized how very short these periods of progress were. Mohammed and the first four caliphs united Arabia, gave it a world vision and laid the foundations of a world empire. Medina, the capital, was the most active center of political and military energy in the world for twenty-five years. Then the political structure in Medina collapsed; the seat of power was transferred to Damascus, and fifty years later practically every vestige of the unity and power of Arabia under

Mohammed and his successors had disappeared and Arabia had reverted to her original chaos. Even the military energy of the peninsular Arabs had largely disappeared, and the Omayyads carried on their campaigns by means of armies which came from Damascus and Mesopotamia. When the seat of power was transferred from Damascus to Baghdad, the armies of the Caliph were made up of men from Khorasan, and later it was the Turks who conquered Constantinople and a considerable section of Europe. Now Baghdad and Damascus contain no reminder of their former glories. They are simply two poverty- and dirt-cursed cities of the provinces of the late Turkish empire. Their only hope is some stimulus that may be brought in from outside.

The student turns from the study of the political history of Mohammedanism with a feeling of dissatisfaction and disappointment. He feels that in studying the history of the various empires which Mohammedanism has produced, he has been dealing with the surface of things, viewing merely the eddies thrown up by a tremendous current underneath, the current of the religion of Mohammed. He concludes that Mohammed with his visions is a more important world figure than all the caliphs of Medina, Damascus and Baghdad, the Moguls of India and the sultans of Turkey.

We will never understand this kaleidoscopic political history until we realize that Mohammedanism consists essentially of an exceedingly strong religion closely bound up with an incredibly weak and hopeless political system. Thus the spread of the religion of Mohammed was in no way interfered with by the collapse of the government at Medina nor with the later collapse in Damascus and Baghdad. It has not even been disturbed

by the hopeless record of Turkish inefficiency and weakness during the past four hundred years. The collapse of a political state never has weakened the hold of Mohammedanism on its people religiously. Political fortunes may come and go; the religion of Mohammed continues to spread. It is spreading today, when the whole Mohammedan world is under the actual or potential control of Christian nations. Indeed we may go further than that. If it is true that Mohammedanism is a mixture of a powerful religious system and a weak political system, we shall probably discover that the removal of its political elements by the suzerainty of alien Powers, far from being a hindrance, will eventually prove to be the painful amputation of a serious handicap and will greatly increase its potency as a religious system.

CHAPTER XI

THE MOHAMMEDAN FAITH

MOHAMMEDANISM is fortunate in possessing a creed that in four words epitomizes its whole system. *"La illah illa allah* (There is no God but God)." The whole of Mohammed's visions are contained in that little creed, the shortest and most powerful creed in the world. The complete creed adds *"wa Muhammad rasul allahi* (and Mohammed is the apostle of God)." No Mohammedan will admit that the first part of the creed can be accepted and the last rejected, but it is the first part that is the important part and the one that is continually in their mouths. Those four words contain the whole Semitic conception of God sharpened and intensified till it dominates the minds of fishermen, nomads and sailors, merchants and landowners and sheikhs. No small part of the great strength of Mohammedanism is to be found in this creed, at once so simple that a five year old child can understand it and so profound that the theologian after a lifetime of study has not exhausted it. "There is no God but God" is a chant by which laborers build a wall. It is a war song by which soldiers march to war. Mothers sing their sick babies to sleep with it as a lullaby, and strong men when they come to die desperately summon their failing faculties and repeating this creed as one last expression of their faith, dismiss their spirits to meet their

Maker. It is largely by means of this creed that the Semitic conception of God, the God of Mohammed, the God of the Koran, has come to be the very foundation of the mental and spiritual life of the blind beggar on the streets of Baghdad, of the howling dervish in Constantinople, of the Indian Mohammedan who is a graduate of Oxford and the Wahabi chief who beats offenders in the oases of Arabia.

At first sight the Westerner does not at all comprehend the depth and extent of this conception. "There is no God but God." It means that into this universe no causation enters except God. We have rain today because God sent the rain, and tomorrow we will have sunshine because He sends the sunshine. There are no secondary causes. Traveling across the Syrian desert, I pointed out a low hill in the distance apparently directly in our line of march and asked the pious camelman how long it would take to reach it.

"God knows," was his brief reply.

"Yes, certainly," I replied, "but how long will it take to get there?"

"The journey is in the hands of God," was his pious but somewhat unsatisfactory answer.

"I have no intention of denying that," I insisted, "but how long do you think it will take us to get there?"

"Don't talk this way," expostulated the man. "Who knows whether we will ever get there? If God ordains, we will all die before we get that far. The future is in God's hands, and it is infidelity to attempt to penetrate it in this way. There is no God but God."

During the war I frequently listened to comments on current events by Mohammed Effendi, the treasurer of Hasa, a pious Moslem whose religious sincerity and hon-

est kindness are well known all over Arabia. "God," said Mohammed Effendi, "is punishing the nations. They have piled up their wickedness like mountains and God is punishing them. All are alike in this, the Christian nations and the Mohammedan nations. There will be no peace until He considers their punishment sufficient." A visitor may sit in the reception room of Ibn Saoud, the greatest figure in present-day Arabia, and see signs of the same conception of our present world. "God has given me Arabia to rule over," says the Great Chief cheerfully, and there will follow narratives of how God delivered into his hand one tribe after another until now a large part of the peninsula recognizes his authority. Hamid, a cook in Bahrein who had served many years as a Turkish soldier, once stole some thousands of *Medjidies,* or Turkish dollars, from the army paymaster and left that region as rapidly as he could. But God, according to Hamid, did not open for him a way of escape. He was captured with the plunder upon him, and the results of the escapade were long and painful.

A notable effect of this picture of God that forms the substance of the Arab's religious thinking, is his keen sense of the importance and reality of the next world. In it the injustices and oppressions of this world are to be rectified, the good are to be rewarded and the bad punished. The punishment of infidels is eternal, but every man who has accepted the Mohammedan creed, who has confessed that "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is the apostle of God," will eventually dwell in Paradise. His sins may require expiation in purgatorial fires, but he himself will eventually enjoy eternal felicity.

This felicity, as the Koran describes it, consists of

a succession of physical pleasures, rest and shade and flowing streams of cool water, delicious food and drinks, perfumes, delightful breezes, and beautiful maidens without number. It is the most attractive picture that the desert Arab is capable of imagining, and consists simply of a magnification of the pleasures of this world, both the good ones and the bad ones. Hope for this eternal felicity fills a much more important place in the Arab's mind than in ours. The extraordinary bravery of the Arab fighter finds a large part of its explanation in this hope. The one way to gain a triumphant entrance into Paradise is to die a martyr on the field of battle, fighting in the cause of God. The Arab who remains alive looks with envy on the fallen bodies of his friends and sighs as he pictures the bliss that they are enjoying, regretting keenly his own unfortunate lot in comparison.

The Arab is reckoned a fatalist and theoretically this statement is true. More, however, has been made of it than the facts warrant. His philosophy of religion does not compel an extreme fatalistic attitude any more than does any system which emphasizes the sovereignty of God. In ordinary contact with the Arab it is impossible to discover that his mind runs in an especially fatalistic groove. His energy in driving a sharp bargain in the cities and his faithfulness in caring for his sheep in the desert are certainly not affected by it. The pearl divers dive from early in the morning till late at night in as exhausting and health-destroying work as could easily be found, and no trace of any fatalistic lessening of effort is to be seen. The so-called fatalism of the Arab is really little more than a keen sense of God's sovereignty and of man's dependence. In time of misfortune it prevents despair and remorse and useless regrets over

the past and is a most valuable element in Arab character. The tremendous courage that the Arab fighter shows is not due to any conviction that some will die no matter what happens. It is due to the fact that all want to die. It is the picture of the bliss of the world to come that is the foundation of that limitless bravery, not any hopeless resignation to an inescapable fate. The fatalism of the Arab, at least of the orthodox Arabs in inland Arabia, is not due, either, to any conviction that at some remote time in the past God wrote out the future course of every man to the minutest detail. It is rather the conviction that God in His omnipotence is working in the present by the immediate exercise of His will. As an academic proposition it is no doubt true that God knew from the first just what He was going to do, and to that extent it was predestined, but the mind of the every-day Arab does not actually dwell on that aspect of it. It is God acting and governing in the present that he thinks about.

The Arab is a credulous individual, as any one may discover by reading the "Thousand and One Nights," the one popular novel of Arabia. The Koran constantly speaks of *jinn*, a mythical order of beings with powers that are superhuman and sub-divine. Thus an orthodox foundation is always at hand for the erection of a complete system of superstition. But in spite of his credulity and in spite of the teaching of the Koran regarding *jinn*, there is little superstition in the daily thought of the Arab. The women are somewhat more superstitious, but the great and overpowering conception of God has largely driven superstition from the minds of the men. I have traveled with them across the empty desert at night. We have plunged together into water-

less wastes where death would be the penalty for failure to reach the next well, then three days away. On such trips I have never heard a wish for good luck nor the hope that ghosts or spirits or spooks of any sort would let us alone. No one is afraid of a black cat or of unlucky days, nor has he a rabbit's foot in his pocket. We start out with the name of God on our lips and the thought of God in our hearts. There is no God but God, and in such a world there is little room for superstition.

The Arab learns with great surprise that in the West many men by their own statement have no religion. Such a state of mind he cannot understand. A man may hold to a false religion—that is a comprehensible attitude—but to be without a religion argues a lapse of mentality. Presumably in every community there are a certain number of men who make religion the first thing in their lives. It would probably be safe to generalize and say that the East has a much larger percentage of such individuals than the West. Their religion may be mechanical and formal, but it is the center of their lives and everything else revolves around it. The missionary from Arabia will hazard the statement that in no country in the world can so large a percentage be found to center their lives religiously as in Arabia.

To the Arab religion is all-inclusive, not simply in that God's will underlies every one of the day's events, but also in that it absorbs all the activities and aspirations of the mind. The search for truth and devotion to it are the glory of the western mind. The only search for truth that the Arab knows is the effort to understand God. The boys who desire to carry their studies beyond the village school enter the study of theology. Small

schools of these first grade theologians may be found in many places and such courses of study may be carried on almost indefinitely. The leading judge of Katif spent twenty years in his theological studies before assuming the duties of his present office. Men of this type have worked out the sequence of question and answer of practically every possible discussion relating to their religion. "No," said the judge of Katif gravely as a friend started a religious discussion with me by asking a certain question, "do not begin that way. It will not come out the way you wish. Let me ask him the first question."

The Arab's theology illustrates well his straightforward, almost mechanical mind. Hasan el Ashari was a redoubtable leader of the hosts of orthodoxy in the tenth century, but early in his life he had been a rationalist and studied for a long time in the rationalist schools. One day he propounded a question to his teacher. A man raised a family of three sons. One grew up to be a reprobate of the reprobates, guilty of innumerable sins, a man hopelessly bad in every way. The second grew up to be a model of piety, and the third died in infancy. What was their fate?

"Certainly," replied the teacher, "the first went to Hell, and the second enjoyed the pleasure of Paradise."

"And the third?" persisted Hasan.

"The third," said the teacher, "was doubtless admitted to Paradise, but to one of its lower grades, not to the degree of bliss enjoyed by his good brother."

"Then," said Hasan, "he will have a just complaint against God, for he will say, 'If He had permitted me to live, I might have grown up and inherited a degree of bliss equal to my fortunate brother.'"

"God will reply," said the teacher, "that had he grown up he would have become like his wicked brother, and he should rather be thankful that God's mercy and prevision had saved him from Hell."

"In that case," replied Hasan, "the eldest will present his complaint that if he had been allowed to die young, he might have secured a place in Paradise like his infant brother and been spared the pains of Hell."

Whereupon, so the story goes, the teacher cursed Hasan as an infidel, and Hasan being convinced that reason is unable to answer the questions of theology, became a firm believer in the absolute authority of the Koran.

Theology is the Arab's only truth, and one might almost say that religious literature and ritual constitute his only beauty. Certain elements of appreciation of beauty appear in the relationships between men and women, mixed with much that is the reverse of beautiful. Aside from these, nearly all that we of the West know of the love of beauty and the desire to find and develop and appreciate it the Arab finds in religion. The landscape and the sunset are nothing to him. He sees beauty in the fine literature of the Koran and in the straight lines and utter simplicity of his mosque.

Some years ago in Kuwait I attended the opening ceremonies of a large school of about five hundred boys. The exercises were of a religious character, and I have never heard anything equal to the musical cadences of some selections from the Koran which were intoned by the dean of the new school as the main feature of the program. No one who has listened to them can forget the beauty of prayers in the desert, where the men standing in orderly lines follow a leader who intones the prayer.

Doubtless the exceptional Arab may find satisfaction for his thirst after beauty in literature and particularly in poetry. There may be a few who learn by travel and foreign education to see beauty in landscape and flowers, but for nine out of ten of the Arabs to whom literature is a closed book and the beauties of nature unexplored mysteries, religion offers the only possible gratification for the love of beauty that is inherent in us all.

Religion, then, includes every event of life, for each event is due directly to God's will and agency. It covers all the higher exercises of the mind and is almost the only field of mental activity. Religion also embraces all the finer human relationships. The Arab knows no patriotism as such. The sentiments that we associate with that conception he brings to the service of a religion that has created for him the only fatherland he knows. He is the greatest internationalist in the world, for this religious fatherland includes all races and nations in its hopes and ambitions and very many of them in its present development.

The Arab mind thus tends toward a curious approximation to pantheism. William Gifford Palgrave, whose famous account of his travels in Arabia, published in 1865, was one of the first authorities on Arab life, called it the "pantheism of force." Every article and every event in man's external environment is the expression of the will of God, a will not expressed in the past once for all, but active in the present. The higher faculties of the Arab mind find their only exercise in an effort to understand and appreciate the greatness and majesty of God, and every aspiration in the realm of human association is directed toward the service of a great international religious fatherland. Nevertheless, no race is

farther from the spirit and beliefs of genuine pantheism. God dominates the external world, but He is always separate from it. He bends and coerces the human spirit, but He is never identified with it. No grain of dust is blown about by the wind except by the express will of God, no baby so much as smiles at its mother except as God orders and directs the smile. Nevertheless, with God Himself there is no commerce either of mind or heart. Men pray and their prayers are the sincere cries of earnest hearts. God in His inscrutable isolation and in His terrible omnipotence hears. He rewards and punishes, but He never replies. Into the heart of God perhaps man enters, who knows? But into the heart of man God does not enter. God rules the world and directs its smallest detail, but He Himself is as inaccessible as the stars.

The corollary to this conception of God is the Arab conception of men,—first their insignificance and helplessness and secondly their equality. Standing before the great, omnipotent and inscrutable God, men are on one level absolutely. This conviction of men's essential equality runs through the whole Arab system of society and government. It has an impregnable strength, for at the bottom it is a religious conviction. Men are equal and are bound together by the obligations of mutual helpfulness. Upon this fundamental element in his religious convictions the Arab has built his whole social structure. To be sure, this conviction is far from being a complete belief in the democratic equality of all men. It is an equality and brotherhood of believers. Outsiders are infidels and outcasts with no rights at all. They and their possessions are the legitimate prey of every believer. Discounted to the utmost,

however, one of the most outstanding testimonies to the strength of the Mohammedan conception of God is the fact that it has succeeded in making this tremendous conviction of human equality a part of the consciousness of the meanest citizen of the great empire of Mohammed. Every man, no matter what his origin or present condition, is equal in God's sight to every other man. There are no distinctions of station or wealth or anything else. What is more significant, no class is religiously better than the rest. Every believer faces God on the same basis as every other believer. Mohammedanism has no pastors, still less has it any place for a priest. Every man deals directly with his Creator on the simple basis of his humanity.

The visions of Mohammed which constitute the basis of these conceptions of God and man have been recorded and transmitted with the greatest care. They form a book called the Koran, which is the sacred book of Mohammedanism. This book, about the length of our New Testament, is reverenced as the most wonderful of God's creations, inspired to the last cross of a "t" and dot of an "i." The usual Mohammedan idea of inspiration is of the most extreme and mechanical type. God dictated every word to Mohammed and is responsible for every syllable and every letter. God's revelation of the Koran to Mohammed marked the beginning of the greatest epoch in the history of the universe.

Although written during the Prophet's lifetime, the revelations of the Koran were not collected into a single book until during the rule of Abu Bekr shortly after Mohammed's death. This work of collection was due to Omar, who became alarmed over the fact that many individual possessors of *suras*, or chapters, of the reve-

lation were being killed in battle. From the remaining companions of Mohammed he had all the available evidence as to the correct text collected and in this way established a standard version. Later, during the rule of Othman, it was discovered that variant readings were creeping into the Koran, and the Caliph therefore ordered every book destroyed that differed from this standard. The text thus established has persisted without a single variation, as far as is known, for thirteen hundred years to this day, certainly an achievement in faithfulness and accuracy nothing short of phenomenal. Undoubtedly it is this careful preservation of the Koran and great devotion to it that have kept the stream of Mohammedanism so constant through the centuries.

To a western mind the Koran lacks all unity and cohesion, and is tiresome and futile. The Westerner reading it is likely to conclude that it is a useless, unorganized and unintelligible mass of words. Nothing could be further from the truth or a better example of the difference between the eastern and the western mind. The Koran is the spiritual guide of two hundred and fifty million people. To them it is a divine book. Its influence would seem to work against great handicaps, for it was long regarded by some Moslems as irreverent to translate it, and even in those countries where Arabic is spoken, the percentage of literacy is not high. These difficulties were overcome, however, by interlinear translations, and in addition ordinary translations of the Koran are now available in Persian, Hindustani, Chinese and presumably in many other languages. There are several excellent translations into English. The illiterate in every Mohammedan community have large opportunity to listen to the reading

of the Koran. Every pious Mohammedan who can read is supposed to read it through during the fast month of Ramadhan, and it is divided into thirty chapters for that purpose. Frequently the rich will arrange to have the entire Koran read through in their houses every night of Ramadhan. For this purpose three readers are engaged, and each reads aloud a third of the book. These professional readers are sometimes blind, but having committed the entire book to memory, they recite it instead, a method which is equally satisfactory.

The nomad Bedouin and the date cultivator, the fisherman and the pearl diver, the artisan and the day laborer are alike in this, that they gain the underlying foundation of their religion from this remarkable book. Every Friday they hear a sermon based on some verse from it. Every one of them who can read has studied the entire book carefully. The boy in Arabia who learns to read at all learns to read the Koran, for there is no other elementary textbook. Thus the visions that came to Mohammed thirteen centuries ago are not merely preserved; they are stamped on the hearts of the common people, and any one who makes himself acquainted with the contents of that book is astonished to see how complete is the correspondence between it and the mind of the everyday Mohammedan.

To the Koran is added a mass of traditions about Mohammed which are second only to the sacred book in their authority and in the influence they have exerted upon the Mohammedan mind. There are thousands of these traditions about the Prophet, including the probable, the improbable and the certainly false. To these traditions commentators and interpreters have added a literature that is like the sands of the sea. The tra-

ditions and the commentaries, however, are for the educated and the religious leaders. It is noticeable that in religious controversy the ordinary man is inclined to quote from the Koran. The philosophical skeleton of Mohammedanism is furnished by the sacred book itself; the traditions and commentaries and the whole mass of other religious literature have merely filled in the details of ritual and observance. However much the various sects may differ in theory and religious practices, there is no school of Mohammedanism anywhere which does not look on the Koran as absolute authority.

According to one of the early traditions, Mohammed is said to have prophesied that Islam would be divided into seventy-three sects, of which seventy-two would perish and one be saved. The various sects of Mohammedans that boast a separate identity are probably well over that number, but the one distinction of pronounced significance is that which divides the Mohammedan world into Sunnis, or orthodox believers, and Shiahs, or heretics.

The current of the Sunni, or orthodox, faith has on the whole been remarkably free from disturbing changes. In the eighth and ninth centuries during the early days of the Baghdad Caliphate, there arose four great *imams* or commentators upon the Koran, and as a result the world of orthodox Mohammedanism has been divided ever since into four schools, the Malikites, the Shafiites, the Hanifites and the Hanbalites, each group taking its name from its founder. These legal schools or rites differ in regard to the traditions ascribed to Mohammed, in regard to the correct posture in prayer, and in other details which seem to an outsider the merest trifles. All but the last mentioned allow the interpretation of the

Koran and the traditions in a somewhat flexible way to meet the needs of changing times. The Hanbalites abhor this modernizing tendency and reject in addition many of the traditions about Mohammed which all the other schools receive. Ibn Hanbal, the founder of this group, was a puritan of the puritans and he preached that salvation for the individual, as for the state, is to be found in strict adherence to the beliefs and practices of the Prophet.

This Hanbalite school has had a great development in modern Arabia. Through the centuries following Mohammed, religious faith and practice in the peninsula became more and more lax, and especially among the desert nomads or Bedouins it gradually became mixed with an astonishing amount of superstition and possibly even idolatry. About the middle of the eighteenth century a puritan zealot appeared, by name Mohammed bin Abdul Wahab, preaching reform. He was a Hanbalite of the straitest variety, and in 1742 Mohammed bin Saoud, then sheikh of Deraiya in Central Arabia, accepted his doctrines. The type of strict Mohammedanism which Abdul Wahab preached makes an overwhelming appeal to the Arab mind. As in the days of Mohammed, the crusade then became both religious and political. In every direction religion was purified and the true faith was spread by means of the sword, and at the same time the political dominion of Mohammed bin Saoud spread far and wide. The whole of eastern Nejd and Hasa soon came under his sway. His son Abdul Aziz conquered the greater part of the whole peninsula. Pilgrim caravans on their way to Mecca were looted, and in 1801 Mecca was captured and drastic reforms instituted there. Kerbela in Mesopotamia was taken and looted the same

year; the shrine marking the tomb of the Shiah saint Hosain was destroyed and the sacred relics were scattered. Enormous plunder was brought back from this expedition. The Wahabis earned the execration of the whole Shiah world by this act of desecration, which has never been forgiven.

The Wahabis were particularly bitter against all veneration of the dead as savoring of idolatry. In 1810 they took Medina and plundered the tomb of Mohammed himself. This act roused against them the determined enmity of the whole Mohammedan world, and the following year Mehemet Ali, the ruler of Egypt, undertook their subjugation as a deputy of the Sultan of Turkey. It was eight years before the Wahabi capital at Deraiya fell, and in the meantime victory was more often with the Wahabis than with their enemies, but their resources were too small to permit them to cope with such an enemy and they were eventually overcome.

A new capital was built at Riyadh a few years later, but the Wahabi state remained in a weak and chaotic condition until the advent of the present ruler, Ibn Saoud, in 1901. His rise to political supremacy in central and northeastern Arabia has been narrated in some detail in a previous chapter. We have here to consider only the religious phase of this modern Wahabi movement, a phase, however, which underlies its every manifestation and furnishes the clue to its political power. For, as might have been expected, along with the political development of the Wahabi state has gone a tremendous revival of the Wahabiism of a hundred and fifty years ago. The revival began as an effort to instruct the Bedouins in their religious rites, especially in the proper performance of their prayers. Those who had received a certain amount of

instruction and were judged capable of passing this instruction on to their fellows were distinguished by a white head-dress and were termed *"Akhwan,"* that is the brothers. The movement originated in the oasis towns, those homes of fanatical Mohammedanism, but it is now strongest among the Bedouin nomads, who have come to look on the oasis townsmen with scorn as being criminally lax in their religious observances.

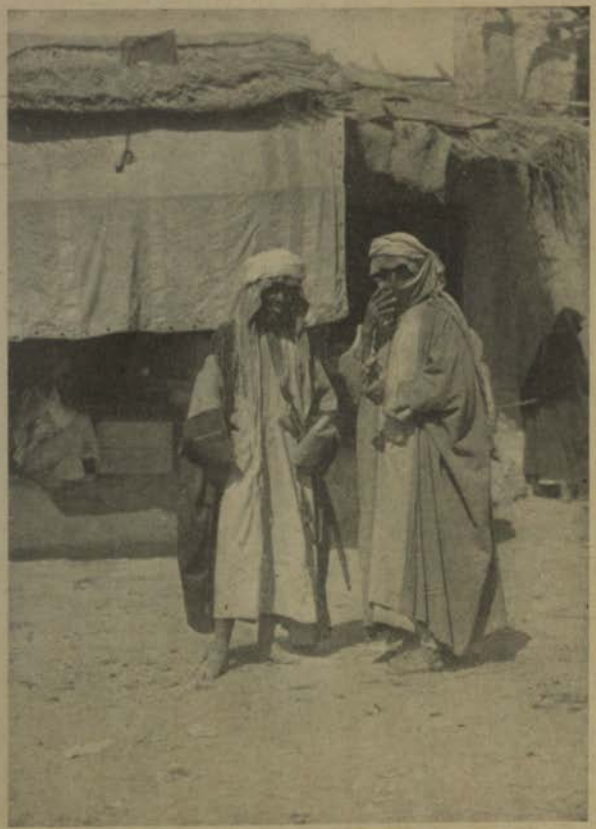
The whole of inland Arabia is now in the throes of this great religious revival. The stiffest sort of Wahabiism is flourishing like a green bay tree. It is a movement of the Bedouins—of men with no education. Not one in a thousand of them can read and write, and few can lead in their own prayers. Their enthusiasm for their new-found or at least newly revived faith is superb. No fate is so desired as that of a martyr in the cause of God. As opponents on the field of battle, they are feared as is nothing else in heaven above or on the earth beneath. Their contempt for foreign infidels is beyond words. Here at last are some people who do not admire western civilization. The British Political Agent from the East Coast once visited Hasa, where many of these fanatical Bedouins come to trade. He was surprised to find that his position made no difference to these dour fanatics. They would turn their backs as he passed, to avoid the contamination of seeing him, an action which disturbed his soul considerably.

These Wahabis actually thirst for death as martyrs in God's cause. No hardship is too much for them, no privation causes complaint if it leads to this end. The rites of their faith are performed with the utmost rigor. The five stipulated prayers are compulsory, and the absentee without good reason is taken before the judge

and publicly beaten. As might be expected, the natural working out of this spirit leads to extreme cruelty at times. Trifles are elevated to the dignity of essential dogmas. The *Akhwan* are intolerant to the last degree. One of their dogmas is the sinfulness of tobacco smoking. Originally doubtless a teaching to the effect that tobacco is much better let alone, this has gradually been elevated to the status of a major doctrine in their minds. Men have even been executed for the heinous crime of tobacco smoking in Wahabiland. Indeed, almost the worst sin recognized is the use of tobacco in any form. Murder, adultery and theft are trifles in comparison. Palgrave, in his description of the original Wahabis, has some passages which might be applied without modification to the *Akhwan* of today. He tells of asking one of their religious leaders what were the principal sins. "The principal sins," replied the leader," are two, polytheism and smoking the shameful," that is tobacco. Another of Palgrave's stories relates how a strict Wahabi sitting by the city gate saw one of the local grandees of Hail come in, dressed in silks and decorated with various gold ornaments. "God," said the stern puritan, "will doubtless forgive murder and lies and theft, but He will never forgive clothes like that."

But it would be unfair to overlook the much finer conceptions to which Wahabiism often leads. I once sat an interested listener to one of Ibn Saoud's sermons delivered to a visiting group of the *Akhwan*. First he quoted some ancient worthy to the effect that most of those going to Heaven go there because of their bad deeds, and the greater number of those suffering in Hell are there because of their good deeds. "Now how can such a statement be explained? Doubtless in this way,





MEMBERS OF THE AKHWAN

that the majority of those who do bad deeds habitually, toward the end of life begin to think upon the evil of their ways, and so thinking, they approach God with humility and ask Him in His mercy to forgive them. Because of their humility God pardons them and gives them an entrance into Paradise. Those who have done good deeds all their life, as they grow old, because of the good deeds they have done and because of the praises they hear, usually become proud, and because of the pride of their hearts, God sends them to Hell."

Such doctrines imply genuinely spiritual ideals. Indeed no one who has come into close contact with these *Akhwan* can doubt their religious fervor. The strict religious observances of Wahabiism, the fanaticism and intolerance even, are the external signs of something within that is real and great. The impression gained from a visit to inland Arabia is quite overwhelming. Riyadh is a community of religion. The evening meal is eaten two hours before sunset so that the day's work can be finished in good time and an opportunity thus secured for daily religious reading and instruction after sunset. Religion is the main pursuit not of a few but, as far as a stranger can judge, of the entire population.

This *Akhwan* movement has no organization, and it has no relationship whatever with the dervish orders that flourish in other parts of the Mohammedan world. It is a tremendous spontaneous renewal of the Arab's perennial search for an adequate conception of God. The Wahabi zealot longs to comprehend and express the great Arabic conception of God's unity and omnipotence and then to enforce its acceptance on every man who falls under his power. Human life is a cheap and small thing to these fanatics compared with religious truth.

They hold as an essential part of their belief the teachings of the Koran and of Mohammed regarding religious war. So the religious life and worship of the Arabs are being cleansed by fire and sword as inland Arabia once more returns to her original faith. The Wahabis are, of course, confined to a limited part of Arabia and constitute only a small proportion of the Sunnis, or true believers, of the great world of Islam, but they represent the modern orthodox faith in what is perhaps its purest and most intense form.

The only important deviation from this main stream of Sunni, or orthodox, Mohammedanism that has been described above, is Shiism. Its name comes from the Arabic word meaning division or schism. Shiism forms the one significant heresy of Mohammedanism. It originated, as recounted in the preceding chapter, in an attempt to secure the office of the caliphate for Ali, the son-in-law of Mohammed, and for his two sons, Hasan and Hosain. From this beginning, which was almost purely political, the movement took on a more and more religious character, and eventually Ali and his two sons were elevated to the rank of saints and had ascribed to them all manner of supernatural powers.

In a rough way, the difference between the Sunnis and the Shiahs is somewhat similar to the difference between the Protestants and Catholics in Christianity. The Sunnis in general, and especially the ultra-orthodox Sunnis of inland Arabia, have a naked, unadorned, monotheistic faith which recognizes nobody and nothing as standing between an individual and his Creator either for good or for ill. The Shiah heresy, on the other hand, spread most widely among the ceremony-loving Persians and was greatly influenced by that

fact. It soon developed a more elaborate ritual than the orthodox Mohammedans would tolerate, and starting from the veneration of Ali and his sons, developed a complete system of saint worship that amounts almost to deification in some places.

Extremists did actually assert the divinity of Ali but such a view failed to make any significant headway. All Shiahs agree, however, in regarding Ali and his descendants as the *imams,* or rightful successors to the authority and power of Mohammed. They believe that the superhuman powers of the Prophet were transferred in turn to these *imams,* who became therefore infallible interpreters of the will of God. The Shiah *imams* number twelve in all. The twelfth *imam* never died but simply retired and will appear at the appointed time as the expected *mahdi,* or guide, the leader of the cause of Mohammedanism in the forcible conversion of the whole world. Associated with the coming of the *mahdi* will be the return of the Christ of the Christians, who will assist in the world conquest. Supporting this mass of heretical theology is a foundation of traditions concerning the teaching and the deeds of Mohammed which are not accepted as genuine by the orthodox.

As might be expected, the Shiahs are more superstitious than the orthodox Sunnis. They make pilgrimages to the tombs not only of Ali and Hasan and Hosain and the others of their *imams,* but also of many other saints of greater or less reputation. Tombs to be visited are to be found in nearly every village where Shiism is the predominant faith. There are elaborate ceremonies, prayers for the dead and detailed representations of past sufferings of martyrs of the faith. Large functions are ascribed to these saints and martyrs

in the regulation of this world's affairs, as also in the salvation of believers in the world to come. The traditions of the Shiahs are kept constantly before the people by public "readings" which consist essentially of the recitation in a high and chanting voice of the sufferings of the religious heroes of the sect, especially of Ali and his sons, Hasan and Hosain. Great crowds gather to listen to the readers, and the emotions run high. Women sit on the outskirts of the meetings and join in the weeping and wailing that accompany the recital. This may last for half an hour or an hour. Suddenly the reading ends and every one is happy and cheerful again. The sudden passing of the emotional storm is as striking as its intensity.

The culmination of this devotion to the saints of the faith comes in Moharram, the first month of the Mohammedan year, when the slaughter of Hosain and his followers at the battle of Kerbela is commemorated. Elaborate processions march through the streets. In them the martyrdom of the heroes of the faith is graphically portrayed and in some cases acted out. The procession contains a group of sword dancers dressed in clean white gowns. As the procession starts, these men gash their foreheads with their swords, so that the blood runs down over their gowns. They present a gruesome spectacle as they dance and brandish their weapons. They are followed by a band of breast beaters, whose breasts will be sore and blue for weeks. There is also a bier with a decapitated hero upon it. A sheep's carcass is placed in position just as the procession starts, with everything covered except the raw and bleeding stump of the neck. Great stress is placed on having the head of this sheep struck off just as the men start, so that blood spurts



THE MOHARRAM

from it for perhaps fifty or a hundred feet of the march. A man rides along on horseback with a sword run directly through his head. This illusion, of course, is produced by using a special headpiece with the two halves of the sword attached. A float contains some children who piteously implore the bystanders for water, to recall the sufferings of the children of one of the ancient heroes. The whole ceremony is well done and is very realistic.

Tremendous emotions are called forth by this spectacle and by the lesser processions of the first ten days of Moharram which lead up to the anniversary of the fateful battle. Men as well as women are overcome by emotion and break down into tears as they look on. There are readings every night which frequently last far into the morning hours. The celebration serves as an annual outlet for the religious emotion of the sect, and however superstitious and childish the observances may appear to us, there is no doubt whatever of the appeal that they make to their devotees. They are impressive, if for no other reason, by virtue of the innate religious thirst that they so obviously satisfy. The followers of the more colorless, albeit philosophically far stronger, Sunni faith, of course, look on all this heresy with stern disapproval as so much idolatry. One of the puritan Wahabis of inland Arabia brought a friend to the Bahrein Hospital and on the occasion of this visit witnessed for the first time this dreadful departure from the true faith. I asked him what they would think of such a procession in inland Arabia. "Such a thing," he replied sternly, "would not be permitted in all the country of Ibn Saoud. Men guilty of such an enormity would be killed."

Since its inception shortly after the death of the Prophet, the Shiah heresy has given rise to numerous distinct sects, all more or less closely allied with the common faith. Under it dervish orders have flourished. The theology of many of these orders has more in common with the pantheism of India than with the monotheism of real Mohammedanism. Mysticism of the most extreme sort has always been one of their characteristics. A prominent example of this tendency of the Shiahs to form secret orders is seen in the Ismailites, or Assassins, who were a medieval development of the faith. They were a carefully organized secret society with lodges scattered over the whole Mohammedan world. There were seven orders in the lodge and those who attained to the highest had ceased to be real Mohammedans at all. This society adopted assassination as a legitimate method of work. By them murder was reduced to a fine art, and they spread terror over the whole Mohammedan world in the later days of the Baghdad Caliphate. The Mongol invaders who destroyed Baghdad and ravaged Mesopotamia have at least this much to their credit, that they wiped out this evil sect.

The Ismailites, although they achieved more notoriety than other groups in the eyes of the non-Mohammedan world, are only one of a great number of Shiah sects, many of which played a prominent part in the political and religious development of Islam in the past and are extremely active elements today. It is beyond our province, however, to follow their history in detail, and for purposes of general consideration the modern Shiah sects may be regarded as a unit.

This highly colored faith with its tendency to pantheism and mysticism, with its saint worship and ritual

and graphic portrayal of the sufferings of saints and martyrs, has a large following among present-day Arabs, particularly in Mesopotamia and among the pearl divers of the Persian Gulf. It seems to appeal especially to the laboring classes. The vast majority of the pearl divers of Bahrein and the East Coast are Shiahs. Just when this schismatic faith penetrated the district no one seems to know. Bahrein is an island, and was once under Persian domination, although the Persian mainland is much farther away than the Arabian, which indeed is in sight of Bahrein on clear days. Possibly as a result of this Persian occupation, the islands and the adjacent Arabian mainland are populated by a peculiar community known as the Baharina, which bears every evidence in temperament and otherwise of being a mixture of Arab and Persian blood. A certain number of Sunni Arabs do dive for pearls, but generally they are strangers who come from outside. The two classes rarely associate even in their work. The Baharina as a community are solidly Shiah in their religious convictions.

The ideas of the Shiahs have never penetrated deeply into inland Arabia, and there the date gardeners are Sunnis, as are also the artisans. Hasa, however, which is at the same time a large oasis and a pearl-diving community near the coast, has been reached by the Shiah faith, with the result that the community is divided sharply into two classes. The smaller class includes the rulers and the merchants and land-owners and is Sunni in its religious convictions. The other, much larger class includes pearl divers and artisans, of whom there are thousands, and the gardeners, who must constitute from seventy-five to ninety per cent of the population, and these are all Shiahs. One might almost say that

every man in Hasa who does an honest day's work is a Shiah.

In general, the people who do the work of Arabia appear to find the Shiah type of Mohammedanism much more satisfactory than the orthodox and mechanical Sunni faith. Why this type of highly colored religion should be the one invariably chosen by the working Arab whenever the choice is offered him, while the nomad, the merchant and the ruler prefer the naked, unadorned worship of the one God, is something that theologians might find an interesting study. Apparently it is essentially a mere variant of genuine Mohammedanism, for its adherents seem to have been drawn from other Mohammedan sects and never from the non-Mohammedan world. However extreme the hostility which may develop between the Shiahs and the orthodox, there is never any tendency to reject the Koran or Mohammed. The appeal of Shiism is a very powerful one, and I have never heard of a Shiah becoming a Sunni either recently or in the past. The current seems always to flow in the contrary direction. At present, however, the movement seems to have come to a standstill. Once only I met a man who was one of a considerable number who had left the Sunni faith to become Shiahs, and that event had taken place nearly fifty years ago. In these days no such conversions are heard of; no one thinks of changing his brand of Mohammedanism either one way or the other.

CHAPTER XII

"THE FIVE PILLARS"

NOTHING surprises a visitor more than the amount of time and effort that the Arabs spend on their religion. Looking out of his porthole on a Persian Gulf steamer, the tourist sees them praying long before he is willing to get up. He learns that these men pray five times a day and that the proper performance of the ceremony takes from fifteen to twenty minutes each time. The richest cannot escape from these prayers and the poorest is not excused from them. Shops in the bazaar close during prayer time. The most important business of life is to pray.

There are other religious duties also. One month out of the twelve is a fast month. Once in his lifetime every Arab who is able to do so must make the long, tedious, expensive journey to Mecca, the religious center of his world. He must repeat his short creed on every occasion. If he is a man of wealth, he must give a definite proportion of his income to religious benevolences. The name of God is on every man's lips continually. The commonest affirmative reply in Arabia is *"Inshallah* (If God wills)," which means in the Arab's mouth exactly what it means in our own. A more unqualified affirmative than this is the name of God repeated rapidly twice, *"Allah allah."* News either bad or good is met with "*El hamdu allah* (Praise the Lord),"

which means the same in Arabia as it does in an American revival meeting.

This use of the name of God is equally common in literature. Every book must begin "In the name of God the Merciful and Compassionate." This is true of the one-page political pamphlet and of the scientific treatise of a hundred volumes. It is true of religious disquisitions and of stories beside which the worst products of Paris and New York are clean and wholesome tales. I once listened to a discussion on this point.

"Your books," an objector said to a mission colporteur, "cannot be good ones. They do not open with 'In the name of God the Merciful and Compassionate.'"

"It is true," replied the colporteur, "that the sacred book of the Christians does not open with that formula, but are you sure that the opening formula is the important thing? I have just sold you an Arabic story-book which is full of accounts of all sorts of sin, and it begins with that formula. Would you rather eat poison over which this formula had been pronounced or wholesome food cooked without it?"

Not only in its opening passage but on almost every page Arabic literature is filled with all the devout phrases that are in common conversational use. The edition of the "Arabian Nights" that we use in the West has lost a certain amount of this picturesque element, but enough remains to give any reader a good idea of this universal characteristic of Arabic literature.

Any one who becomes intimately acquainted with the Arab realizes that these external observances and this free use of the name of God in conversation and literature are simply external signs of an overwhelmingly religious mind. We of the West, even regular church-

goers, have a very mild sort of religion judged by Arab standards. With the majority of us religion has been relegated to the category of the vague, the distant and the uncertain. The material affairs of this present world occupy our minds. The Arab's mind, on the contrary, is essentially religious and he finds in the observance of his various religious duties a profound satisfaction that the average Westerner might be somewhat at a loss to comprehend.

Just as the religious philosophy of the Arab centers around his conception of God, so his religious observances center around prayer. In the West, the average Christian lays more stress on the weekly preaching service on Sunday than on his daily individual prayer. In the mind of the Arab this order is reversed. He also has weekly services of prayer and preaching on Friday, which corresponds in his system to our Sunday, but this weekly preaching service does not compare in importance with the prayers that he repeats carefully five times every day. It makes no difference who may be present, or what may be the business of the moment. Two hours before sunrise, at noon, two hours before sunset, at sunset and two hours after sunset, five times each day, the stipulated prayers must be observed. Ablutions, in water or if no water is available in sand, are required before these prayers. The proper performance of the prayer ceremony takes perhaps fifteen or twenty minutes each time. These ritualistic prayers, the form of which has not varied for thirteen hundred years, are obligatory on all men alike.

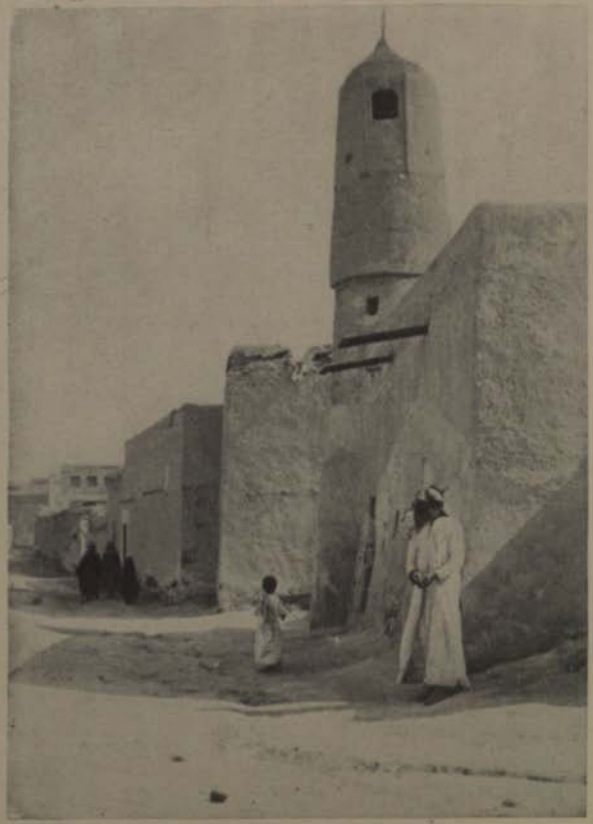
Prayers may be performed privately at home but it is reckoned much more meritorious to pray with the congregation in the mosque. In congregational service a

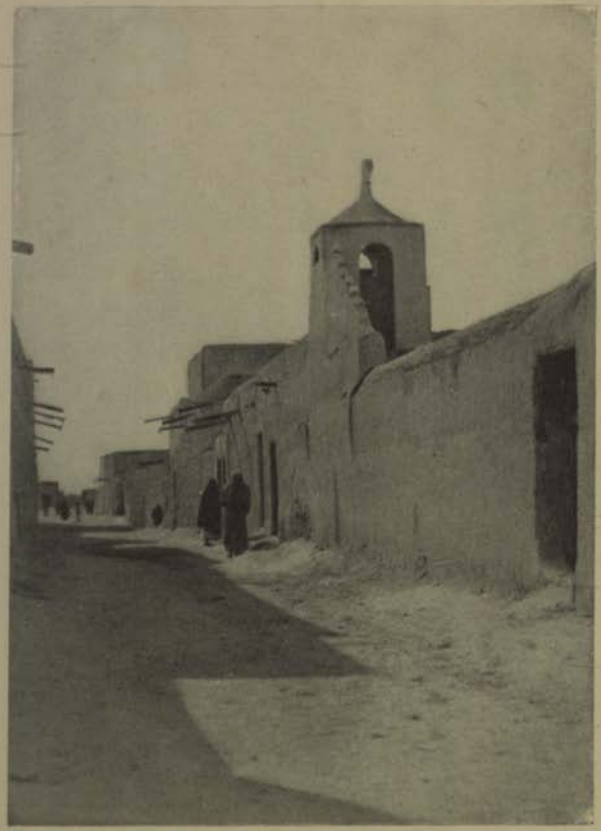
leader intones the prayer, and all join in the *"A—min"* with which the different paragraphs close. The hundreds of worshippers stand in long rows, and as the leader ends each paragraph, the deep musical *"A—min"* of the response sounds almost like the tone of a great organ. I know of few more impressive sights than sunset prayers in the large city mosque, or better still, out under the open sky in the limitless desert. Line behind line they stand and kneel and prostrate themselves together. The master is there with his slave. The man who has spent twenty years in the schools stands next to a Bedouin who can neither read nor write. The richest man of the community stands next to one who is just out of jail for debt. No one is surprised, for it is the ordinary thing. It would surprise them to be told that there are places in this world where men persist in their conceits and divisions even when standing in the presence of the omnipotent God.

In inland Arabia, where the fanatical Wahabis live, the roll is called at early morning prayers and any man who is absent is hunted up and hailed before the judge. Sickness is an adequate excuse and if on some account the absentee prayed in another mosque, he is dismissed as blameless, but if he was simply too lazy to get up in time for such early devotions, he is publicly beaten to increase his zeal. A few years ago one of the rising generation in Riyadh decided that he had prayed enough, and absented himself from all prayers for a week. His rebellion lasted that long only because there was difficulty in locating him. He was brought before the judge and examined.

"Why have you stopped praying?"

He was a stout-hearted reprobate and added insult to





TYPICAL MOSQUES

injury. "Because," he replied, "I am tired of praying so much."

He was executed on a high gallows and his body left there as an example for the general public. His father, who came to intercede for the foolish boy, was publicly beaten for so far making himself an accomplice in the heinous crime of infidelity.

These prayers are ritual prayers and, repeated five times a day, they suffer the inevitable fate of ritual and become formal and mechanical. It is not correct, however, to brand them as insincere. For centuries, millions have put these prayers first in their lives, and it is idle to bring a charge of insincerity against such an institution. According to the teaching of the *mullahs,* or religious leaders, there is opportunity for the presentation of personal requests after the completion of the stipulated ritual. Few Mohammedans know of this provision and fewer still make use of it. As far as the ordinary Arab is concerned, ritual prayers are the only kind he knows anything about. Mechanical and formal as they are, they are often the sincere cries of earnest hearts. I have seen grizzled patriarchs, veterans of many a raid and many a hard campaign, pause by the side of the operating table and stand there silently as their lips moved in the repetition of some part of their prayers.

Just as prayer is the most outstanding feature of the Arab's religious life, so the house of prayer or mosque is the most striking architectural feature of his cities and towns. The religion of the Arab centers around the mosque. All prayer is more efficacious and meritorious if performed in the mosque, and there is the added attraction of friends to meet. Mosques are numerous in every Mohammedan city. There is no rule as to the number,

but generally they are small and the community served by one cannot exceed fifty to two hundred families. It is a very small village that has but one mosque. To this little mosque the male members of the entire community come five times a day to pray together. Neighborliness as well as religion is fostered by such an arrangement.

There are a few larger mosques especially designed to accommodate the Friday worshippers. Probably a dozen to twenty small mosques hold no service Friday noon, and a special service which includes a sermon is held instead in the large mosque. During the week this large mosque serves its own small community, just as do the small mosques of the city. This large mosque, or *masjid el jami,* as it is called, is the center of community life. Its primary function is religious, but it serves also to house religious schools of an advanced type and occasionally even primary Koran schools. It is also an inn where any belated traveler may rest for the night, where the poor who must beg for their living can sleep, and where any man who is sick may rest till he recovers, if he has no better place to go. I myself have slept in the wayside mosques of Oman while traveling in that part of Arabia. This function of the mosques as philanthropic institutions is very important. No beggar, no traveler, no stranded sick man need lack for shelter, at least, in any Mohammedan city.

Mosques are for *men* to pray in. Women are supposed to pray just as faithfully as the men, but they pray at home. Only in Oman do they pray in mosques and then not with the men but in mosques of their own. However, the Friday services are frequently listened to by numbers of women. They can be seen sitting closely veiled outside the sacred precincts. No doubt they enjoy

the service quite as keenly as the men, and the social experience is also attractive, for it is quite an event in the lives of such secluded women.

In Arabia in general, and particularly in inland Arabia, the architecture of the mosque is severely simple. The high minaret and the elaborate dome with the gilded roof are developments of more luxurious and worldly communities. The Wahabi puritans of inland Arabia have low minarets which are devoid of every architectural embellishment. Within there is no decoration. The worshipper sees clean mats spread on a clean floor and clean white walls with a niche in that wall which faces Mecca. The more elaborate architecture that has been developed in Turkey and Persia represents the influence of foreign elements in Mohammedanism not found in inland Arabia.

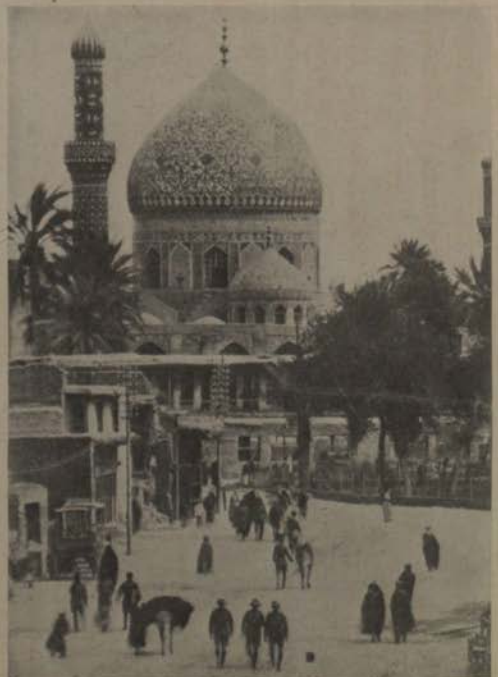
The services are as simple as their surroundings. The daily prayer services are simply prayers with nothing whatever added, and the Friday service is nearly as simple. There is no effort at enrichment or variety in the simple united worship and sermon. The men stand in orderly rows, and following a leader they repeat the *"A—min"* after each paragraph of the prayer he intones, and kneel and prostrate themselves and rise together. There are no responsive readings and no music. Such innovations would be regarded with horror. Mohammed is said to have closed his ears once on hearing music, and so for the orthodox of all time it is taboo. I once asked an Arab to come into a Christian service in Bahrein. "Do you call that a religious service?" he asked with great scorn. "Why there is music there, and women with their faces uncovered,—just like a theater."

What has been said above applies to the orthodox

Sunni community. The Shiahs pray three times a day instead of five. The noon prayers and the late night prayers are omitted and the afternoon and sundown prayers are lengthened to make up the difference. This practice is allowed among the Sunnis only on a journey. The prayers in the mosque are much less emphasized by the Shiahs than the Sunnis. In particular the emphasis put upon the Friday service has almost disappeared and the frequent public readings, or recitals of the deeds of Hasan, Hosain and other martyrs of the faith, occupy a large place in Shiah religious life. These readings may be held in the afternoon or evening on any day of the week and in any house.

Next to prayer the most important religious observance in Arabia is fasting. Every Mohammedan must fast one lunar month out of the twelve. The month called Ramadhan is set apart for this observance. By fasting the Arab means abstinence from all food, drink and tobacco from early morning to sunset. From the time in the morning when a black thread can be distinguished from a white one until sundown, he may taste nothing. During the night, however, men may eat and drink, and thus it happens that the fast month by day is a feast month by night. It is the season *par excellence* for indigestible pastries and impossible candies. The bazaar is frequently open and brilliantly illuminated the whole night. More cases of acute indigestion come to the hospital during this month than in any other two.

In the days when the Turks were in power, there were usually a large number of leading citizens of the official class who regularly broke the fast in private while outwardly making great professions of observance. In Kuwait, when Sheikh Khazal of Mohammerah visited





MOSQUES IN MESOPOTAMIA

the late Sheikh Mubarak, the faithful of the city were scandalized by having the visiting sheikh ride out in state during the fast month with a water jug carried along openly lest a transient thirst should go unslaked. This gratuitous insult to the exceedingly religious inhabitants of Kuwait was very keenly resented.

But violations of the spirit and letter of this law are rare among the Arabs. The month is a time of great hardship for cultivators and other working men. Since the Mohammedan year of twelve lunar months is about ten days shorter than a solar year, the different months move gradually around the circle of the four seasons. The fast month works far less hardship in winter than when it comes in summer. A pious Arab considers it next to infidelity to complain of any hardship caused by the fast, and the men who do the heavy work of the cities are frequently the most scrupulous of all in its observance. Their constancy reflects no small credit on their religious devotion, especially in summer when the days are long and hot. From the beginning of the fast at early dawn till sunset may be sixteen hours or even more, and heavy work under an almost tropical sun for that period of time without food or drink is an indication of real religious zeal. There is no difference between Sunni and Shiah here. All are examples of faithfulness.

Everybody is short-tempered in Ramadhan. In an Arabian bazaar a quarrel is a rare thing. It is a great disgrace to forget one's self in public so far as to manifest a loss of temper, and thus with all the bickering and bargaining of the market, one might visit it every day for a month without witnessing a single altercation. But in Ramadhan it is another story. From the middle of the afternoon till sundown the place is full of quarrels. Men

lose their temper over a penny. The shopkeepers refuse to bargain.

"What is the price of this?"

"Five *Medjidies.*"

"Certainly that is much too high. I will give you two."

"If you ask me to quote a price again," snarled a shopkeeper to me once under these circumstances, "it will be six *Medjidies,* and each time after that it will go up a *Medjidie.*" The next morning when temper is restored the article can probably be bought for three.

Next to prayer and fasting the Arab regards almsgiving as the sign of a really religious man. The Arab's idea is that merit lies in feeding any beggar however undeserving, and much of the almsgiving is done as by the Pharisees of old to be seen of men. A reputation for religious zeal is an invaluable asset in Arabia, and a high price is sometimes paid for it. Some rich merchants of Bahrein distribute a religious tithe among the poor once each year. On the day of the distribution traffic in the region of the benevolent merchant's office is blocked for several squares. Poor women receive much of this money, and no event of the year brings out such a crowd of the sequestered females of Arabia. The blind and crippled receive considerable amounts, and no effort is made to distinguish between needy applicants and those who are simply turning an honest penny in the most convenient way.

Beggars in Arabia never go hungry. Indeed, the blind beggars, of whom there are always many, usually appear to be the fattest members of the community. These men are in need, and as they beg from door to door scarcely a house will refuse to give them something. It

is easy to see the evils of such a system. Unquestionably it encourages shiftlessness; one might almost say that begging is the easiest way to earn a living in Arabia. Some of us, however, may be allowed to doubt whether this easy charity is any less acceptable to the Judge of All the Earth Who does Right, than the hard-boiled callousness with which the West treats its unfortunates. The virtues of the system are not to be lightly passed over. Every oriental community contains many who must beg. There are men out of work seeking a new location with their families, who beg rather than impose on the hospitality of a total stranger. Apparently none of them suffer from hunger. And when years of extreme want come and animals die from lack of food and water, the system means that the slender resources of the community are available for all till better times appear. It is a rare thing indeed for any man or woman in an Arab community to come to actual hunger, and starvation is unknown.

To this more or less conventional almsgiving the pious Mohammedan, moved by the vision of God's omnipotence and men's equality, frequently adds a neighborliness and practical benevolence that give us much to admire and not a little to imitate. A retired and broken business man of Bahrein was once a patient in the Mission Hospital. His money was gone and he was accompanied by a single servant. Nevertheless, he was visited with great faithfulness by many of his old friends, who included some of the richest business men of the city. One of them, perhaps the most important of all, came regularly every morning to sit and visit for half an hour or more. That man was agent for a line of steamers; his business was large and its de-

mands incessant, but even on days when his steamers were unloading, he found time to come and visit his friend.

That bankrupt merchant had more to thank his friends for than visits when he was sick. For years he had been the leading business man in Bahrein, and his name was a synonym for generosity and fair dealing over all eastern Arabia. But in an evil moment he took up pearl brokerage and inside of a few years he was penniless. His debts were overwhelming. He could not meet them by hundreds of thousands of dollars, but his friends arranged matters so that on the settling up of his affairs he still had some thirty thousand dollars left upon which to live comfortably and with which to start his children in business

The men's ward in the Bahrein Hospital is crowded with visitors nearly every afternoon. Even distant relatives and nominal friends try to drop in occasionally to express their good wishes and their confidence in the favorable outcome of the illness. After about four o'clock the ward buzzes with such a talk-*fest* as hospitals at home know nothing about. It is reckoned a grievous thing to forget one's duties to a sick friend, and hardly anything causes such resentment as neglect at that time.

The Arab, even in his casual relationships, is very anxious to avoid any infliction of pain or discomfort. He will tell a lie rather than wound the feelings of a chance acquaintance, even though he knows perfectly that the real truth will be known very soon and that the pain of the discovery will be in no way lessened by the delay. The most optimistic attitude is taken toward everything. Sometimes this is ludicrous. Sometimes it is pathetic.

A sick man is assured that he is looking better up to within five minutes of his death. The traveler across the desert is assured that the end of the day's journey is almost in sight. The doctor asking where the sick man lives is assured that it is near by. I once walked a distance that must have been nearly five miles to get to such a "near" house. But there is something to be said for this attitude of mercy, which to the best of its ability lightens the troubles of the world by at least asserting their insignificance. The Arab understands far better than we do what Christ meant when He said, "Blessed are the merciful."

Every good Moslem must also testify to his belief in God and the Prophet on every possible occasion. The regular formula, "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is the apostle of God," must be on his lips continually. Any man whose religious complexion is under suspicion is immediately asked to testify in this manner. "*Istishhad* (Testify)," said a dour Wahabi to me as I sat on the bench outside the door of Ibn Saoud's castle once, while waiting for news of my arrival to be carried to the chief. But I did not testify and the man became suspicious.

"Do you testify that there is no God but God?"

"Certainly."

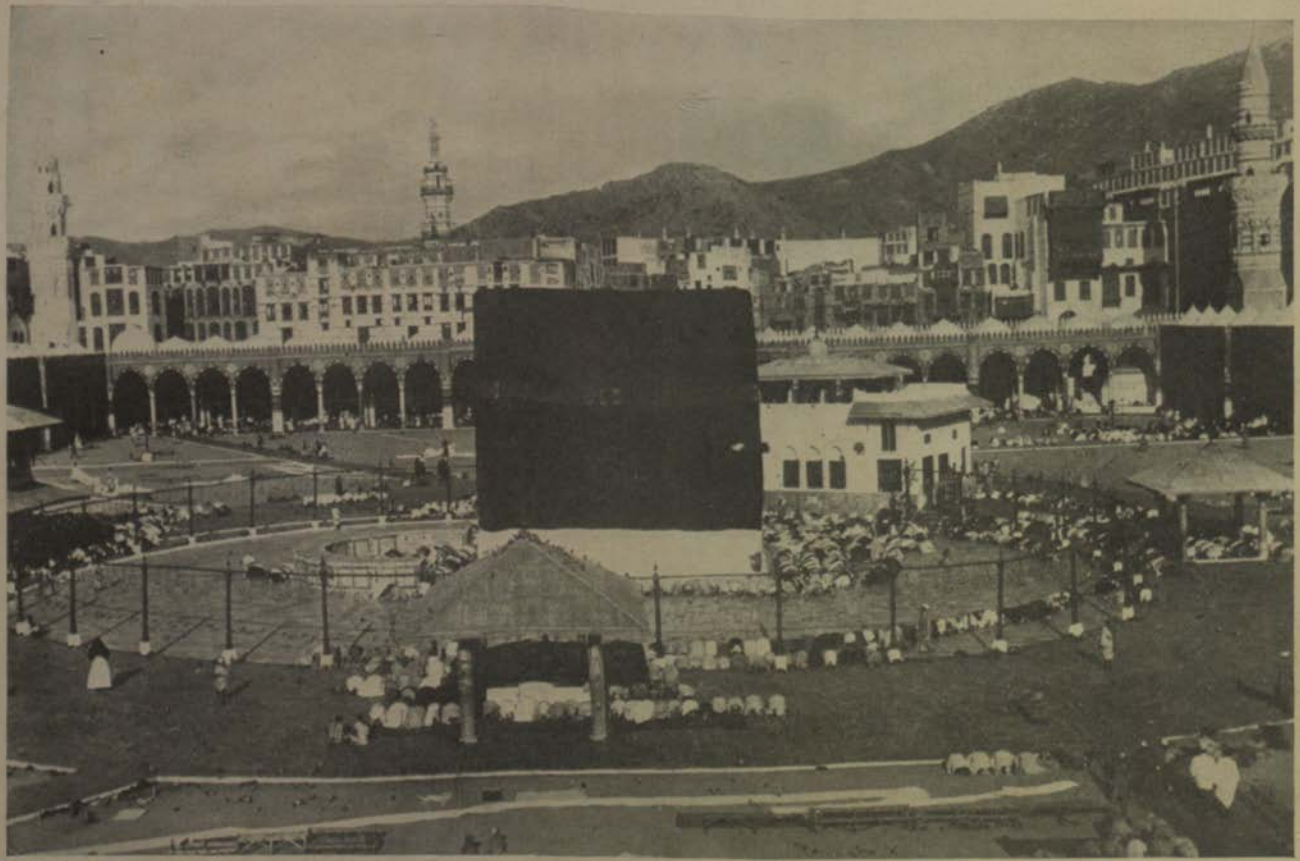
"Do you testify that Mohammed is the apostle of God?"

"No."

I was regarded with great surprise and curiosity. Here was a man who split his faith in two, a phenomenon apparently new to my questioner. Further inquiries were interrupted by an invitation to enter the castle.

To these four "pillars of religion," as the Arab terms them, must be added a fifth, namely the pilgrimage to Mecca, or the *hadj,* as it is called in Arabia. Every Mohammedan who is able to undertake it is expected to make this pilgrimage at least once. "Ability," however, is interpreted very flexibly, and barring the very rich, who lose caste by not conforming to their religious duties, it is more a matter of zeal than of means. The pilgrimage usually takes nearly six months' time, and while the rich spend far more than the poor, the trip is for all a great expense and burden. Nevertheless the number of pilgrims is enormous. One year when I was in Kuwait the *hadj* numbered over a thousand from that city alone. It is claimed that in one season there may be one hundred and fifty thousand pilgrims visiting Mecca.

Mecca, the pilgrimage city, is perhaps fifty miles from the Red Sea in the kingdom of Hejaz in western Arabia. It has no railroads, and the caravan routes entering it are usually infested by turbulent Bedouin nomads who extort a rich tribute from the unwilling pilgrims. The city itself, according to Arab testimony, is no ornament to Mohammedanism. Immorality is rife, profiteering is universal and gambling and drinking common. However, the sanctity of the city as the pilgrim's objective is in no wise impaired by these conditions. The man who has made the *hadj* is a *hadji* for the rest of his life, and has gained a past master's degree in the greatest fraternity in the world. He stands before the greatest ruler, as before the meanest citizen, on a plane of special honor. He may spend the rest of his days in jail for debt, he may be decapitated for murder, but he remains a *hadji.*



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PILGRIMS AT MECCA

Funeral rites among the Arabs are simple and impressive. The dead individual is buried before sundown of the same day if that is possible, and early in the morning if death occurred in the night. There is a very great reluctance to bury at night, and such a burial is almost never seen except during a great epidemic. The body is carefully washed and wrapped in clean white cotton cloth and this again in some heavier material. There are some simple exercises in the home consisting essentially of a short reading from the Koran. The body is then carried on a stretcher to the cemetery where the grave has been prepared. The size of the crowd that follows the bier testifies to the prominence of the dead man in the community. It is an act of religious merit to assist in carrying such a bier, and the merit does not depend on the length of time spent in the service, so as many as possible try to assist, if only for a few seconds, and as the bier moves rapidly down the street to the chant of *"La illah illa allah,"* the bearers are constantly changing. At the grave the ceremonies are brief. The body is laid on its side in a niche cut in one side of the grave so that the dead man faces Mecca. A roof of flat stones is placed sufficiently above the body to permit it to sit up. The *mullah* in charge gives the dead man his final instructions as to the proper answers for the recording angel, who will soon come to question him. He must sit up to reply. After the final instructions are given, the grave is filled. The ceremonies of the Shiahs are somewhat longer, especially at the house before the procession starts for the cemetery, but even these are not elaborate. A *mullah* may be engaged to read at the grave for a few days. Sometimes the dead man leaves money to provide for

the continuance of this service over a long period. This, however, is an unusual thing, and in general the Arab dismisses the departed with the hope that he has gained an entrance into Paradise and turns to the usual duties of life with less of the unhealthy desire to cling to a fond memory than prevails with us. The idea of communications with the departed or of visitation by their spirits seems to be entirely foreign to the Arab mind. The dead man has "entered into the mercy of God."

CHAPTER XIII

AN APPRAISAL OF MOHAMMEDANISM

IT is now thirteen hundred years and a little more since Mohammed saw his visions and gave his new religion to the world. His system was wonderfully adapted to the Arab mind, for it was little else than the projection of that mind into the realm of religion. As its history shows, it proved almost equally adapted to the primitive mind everywhere. It has spread into every continent in the world except one, and now comprises over two hundred and fifty million followers. For aggressiveness, flexibility and power Mohammedanism is the outstanding religious phenomenon of centuries.

Wherever this faith has been carried, the primitive mind accepts its main philosophical tenets with the unquestioning acquiescence that we give to a geometrical axiom. One might as well argue with a Westerner that things equal to the same thing are unequal to each other as to argue with an Arab against the fundamental articles of the Mohammedan creed. This has been the first and perhaps the most important reason for its almost irresistible spread. The ignorant African in Zanzibar, the Moro in the Philippines, the Afridi in Afghanistan and the Turk in Constantinople, together with the Arab who gave the system to the world, bow down unquestioningly to its philosophical system.

It is not remarkable that trained schoolmen come to

argue skilfully in Islam's favor. Trained schoolmen can argue skilfully for anything. But it is remarkable that the untutored Bedouin of the desert, who never read a book nor went to school a day in his life, brings every new philosophical and religious idea that he meets to the touchstone of Mohammedan philosophy and unerringly rejects it if he finds it inconsistent with that system. When that philosophy has once been introduced into the primitive mind, all external phenomena and all mental processes seem to range themselves around it as a center, like ice crystals around a nucleus in slowly freezing water. I have discussed religion with fanatical Bedouins of the desert, with the Shiah Mohammedans of Katif, with the liberal Mohammedans of Mesopotamia and with the nationalist Mohammedans of North India. However they may differ in externals, they are all alike in this, that their minds are all centered about Mohammed's great conception of God. Every other element is subordinate to that.

The second great reason for the strength of the system that Mohammed introduced is the satisfaction it affords to the religious nature. It is idle for us of the West to assert that we can see flaws in its spiritual conceptions. Men and women by the million live by that faith and would be glad to die for it. Its conception of God harmonizes their universe. In its vision of God's unity and omnipotence their highest religious feelings are satisfied; in unquestioning obedience and whole-hearted devotion to this God they find an adequate object and purpose for life. Here also it is not the devotion of trained beneficiaries of the system that stirs our surprise. The very essence of the system's strength lies in the fact that it commands the whole-hearted de-

votion of common men, nomads, cultivators and laborers. In twelve years' experience in Arabia, never but once have I been able to discover any evidence of unsatisfied spiritual thirst in an Arab's mind. Mohammedanism appears to satisfy every one of his conscious religious needs. The African negro finds in this religion a satisfaction that his animism never afforded. The Malay head-hunter and the mountaineer from Central Asia are similarly captivated. The man is blind who sees in Mohammed's sword the explanation for the spread of his religion. Mohammedanism lost its sword long since, but it still spreads, and for the same reason that it spread when first introduced, because of its appeal to the mind and heart of primitive men.

A third reason for the great strength of the system that Mohammed introduced lies in the social order which it sets up. That social order may be pitifully weak and utterly stagnant. It contains none the less the one thing that men want—human equality. Its success in this regard has been far from perfect. Society in the oases and coast communities of Arabia itself is composed of rich merchants and land-owners and poor cultivators and pearl divers. Slavery has been accepted as a normal element of society; women form almost a pariah caste. But religiously every caste line has been wiped out. Men pray together, rich and poor and small and great, one next to another in the great mosque, and every departure from this spirit in the social life of the community is regarded as flatly in contradiction with the will of God. Furthermore race lines have been obliterated. The black man in Africa and the brown man in the Malay peninsula, the yellow man in China and the white man in the Circassian Mountains, are all equal

in the sight of God and in this great international fraternity. The *hadj,* or annual pilgrimage, brings together men of almost every eastern nation. This internationalism is a very real and a very powerful thing. The great schools of Cairo and Mecca are filled with students from Java and Singapore and China. I have met men from North Africa studying in Hasa. One of my friends in Bahrein told me with great elation of his brother who was a teacher in a Mohammedan school in the Philippine Islands. In that tie he felt the thrill of a religion that was as wide as the world itself. A few years ago a road in Cawnpore, India, was laid out so as to trespass in a trifling way on the grounds of a mosque. The local Mohammedans were furious at this affront to their faith, and so were the Mohammedans of Bahrein hundreds and thousands of miles away.

Moreover, wherever Mohammedanism has gone, the value of the individual has been emphasized and men stand upright in the strength of an unbreakable self-respect. The Indian as a rule is a somewhat cringing individual but no one could say that of the Mohammedans of India's northern provinces. The most intractable fighters against alien domination in the Philippines were the Mohammedan tribes. Turkey is a stagnant country, backward in all the arts of modern civilization, in trade and in education. Nevertheless, the Turk is one of the best and cleanest fighters in all Europe. The Mohammedans of North China are so different from the orthodox Mohammedans of inland Arabia that they would scarcely be accepted by those puritans as members of the Great Fraternity. Nevertheless they are the strongest element in that country. There is no doubt that this religion has wonderfully developed the

self-respect of the races who have adopted it and made them much less willing to accept alien domination. Such a spirit is an invaluable contribution to their eventual development.

Thirteen centuries is a long time, sufficient to justify an appraisal of the effect of this religion on human society in the various countries where it has been introduced. The results of such an examination are somewhat surprising. Something of the strength and fineness of its conceptions has been indicated above. But all institutions of society must be judged finally by the standards of the biologist. Religion, like everything else, must expect to be asked not merely whether it is venerable or even whether it is attractive. The first question is whether it is beneficial. Does it increase man's ability to exploit his external environment? In other words, does it help humanity to obtain food and clothes and fuel and shelter?

Mohammedanism, with its powerful appeal to the mind and heart, might be expected to strengthen any community accepting it, and to make that community's cooperative adaptation to its environment much more effective. Unfortunately the most superficial examination shows that the new system instead of helping has proved a hindrance. It is hardly correct to speak of the Arab as extracting subsistence from his external environment. It must be presented to him above ground, almost thrown in his face, before he makes use of it. Many more oasis communities might be established in Arabia if the Bedouins of the desert cared for the work of gardening. Nothing but the pinch of actual want will induce the pearl divers of Bahrein to fish throughout the winter when diving for pearls is impossible. The Gulf is

full of fish, but fishing is hard and laborious. Hardly a society on earth could be found with less aptitude than the Arab's for extracting a satisfactory subsistence from its external environment.

What is true of Arabia holds true of other parts of the Mohammedan world. Mesopotamia with its fertile soil watered by two rivers was once the garden spot of the earth. The inhabitants were then largely fire-worshippers. Physical conditions have not changed, but after thirteen hundred years of Mohammedanism Mesopotamia is a desert inhabited by roving nomads. Turkey is splendidly endowed with natural resources, but even those that are easily accessible, like petroleum in the Mosul district, have been allowed to lie unused. India is a backward land, a country of poverty and stagnation, and of all the communities in India, the Mohammedans are the most backward, the least literate. The various tribes of the Philippines, on the other hand, have made much progress in the last hundred years; it is scarcely too much to say that they are now about to enter the company of independent civilized nations. But the Philippines include one stagnant element, the Mohammedan Moros, who have no desire for civilization and have remained in their former semi-savage state. Afghanistan, Persia and Egypt are all Mohammedan states. All are only now emerging from the twilight of barbarism, and the small advances that they show they owe to the stimulus of contact with, and even coercion from, the external non-Mohammedan world. Wherever we meet this religion, the story is the same. Nowhere has it brought real progress. Everywhere it has been a hindrance. Man's ability to live, to wrest life's necessities from the material world, has been diminished rather

than increased by the religion of Mohammed.

A religion might conceivably tend downward of itself, but because of its tolerance and the receptivity it induces toward all good things from without, so facilitate the assimilation of other peoples' progress that the sum of its influence would still be favorable. But Mohammedanism is not simply sterile of itself. It has not merely subtracted from the ability of every community accepting it to gain a livelihood from external environment. It has so developed prejudice and pride in its devotees that no such determined enemies of all progress are to be found anywhere as Mohammedan states and Mohammedan communities. With the exception of Tibet there is hardly a country in the world closed to travelers and to scientific investigators except Mohammedan countries. Modern education is penetrating the world and the results of the scientific investigation of the West are being gladly utilized by nearly every nation, again with the exception of the Mohammedan countries. Our American universities contain thousands of students from China, and hundreds from India, from Japan, and even from the minority communities of the Near East. As a contrast there are surprisingly few who come from Mohammedan states. There is no religion in the world that has so developed self-sufficiency, intolerance and pride in its followers and so walled them off from everything that could enter from outside and contribute to their material and social and spiritual progress.

The explanation of this intolerant unprogressive spirit is to be found in certain inconsistencies which seem to be inherent in the fundamental conceptions of Mohammedanism even when those conceptions are at their finest. No man who gets a glimpse of the splen-

did picture of the great omnipotent God of Mohammed can be otherwise than filled with admiration and even awe. It is one of the grandest conceptions of the human mind. God is the governor of the external universe, from the mosquito as it bites a man to the swing of the stars in their orbits. He is the ruler in all human affairs. The infant in arms and the greatest monarch in the world alike obey His omnipotent will. It is the picture written on the desert and in the stars, boundless power, inscrutable, magnificent, ruthless, inaccessible. God is bound by no limitations of the world which He created, nor of His own nature nor of anything else. A view of that picture is to the Arab the sum total of attainable wisdom. Its confession before the world is the fulfilment of every spiritual and ethical obligation. That picture has made the Arab superior to the bitterest poverty and the most demeaning surroundings. It has made him one of the bravest fighters on earth. It has driven race prejudice from his heart, a triumph unequalled by any faith or belief anywhere. It has made him the most determined believer in human equality in the world.

But this splendid conception of God has certain defects and in practical life they do much harm. God is capricious and inconsistent. Like the Arab sheikh of whom He is a magnified reproduction, He may do good today and evil tomorrow, and to presuppose any limits to His behavior, even those dictated by a benevolent nature, is to limit His omnipotence. An element of caprice is an essential part of the Arab idea of omnipotence, and a loophole is thus left for all sorts of inconsistencies of character, as witness the divine approval of various transgressions of which Mohammed

was guilty. Furthermore, with all His omnipotence, God still has the mind and temper of a human sheikh, and rather a poor sheikh at that. The childishness and selfishness predicated of God are really astonishing considering the magnificence of His omnipotence. God is not interested in man's happiness nor in his development. He is not greatly concerned over his ethical behavior. The one thing that marks out a man for divine approval and eternal felicity, instead of divine wrath and eternal woe, is proper recognition of God's unity and omnipotence and acknowledgement of them in the correct formulary way. Any man who so conforms is a delight to God's heart. He may be decapitated for murder. He may die in jail for theft. For such trifles he will have to suffer certain purifying fires in Purgatory, but having responded with the correct formula, he is sure of an eternal place in the Garden of God.

The effect of really believing such teaching can be imagined. Even the conception of human brotherhood does not work out as well in actual life as in theory. The world is divided into two classes, God's favorites, who have rendered assent to the formula of belief, and infidels who have not. These latter deserve nothing better than death and torture eternally for hard-heartedly resisting and refusing to bow down. They have no rights whatever. In communities where a considerable portion of the population are one sort or another of tax-paying infidels, the resulting arrangement of society is about as undemocratic as government could well be. Throughout the Turkish empire Christian minorities have always paid large proportions of the taxes. They are called on for all sorts of civic duties. They have no share in the government and meet all manner of perse-

cution from insignificant insults to widespread massacre. The conquest of these hard-hearted infidels is the one straight road to the particular favor of God.

It is something of an eye opener to an American to meet a religious fanatic from the desert. His hair is a densely populated city, and his bed and bedclothes constitute another city with a different population. This man has not had a bath quite possibly for months, but he strides into the market at Katif, we will say, with two sheep to sell, the poorest man in sight as far as the wealth of this world is concerned but much the most important man in the city in his own estimation. He is told that the stranger whom he sees for the first time is from the land of the "Ingleez," that he is a marvelous doctor whose treatment of the sick is little short of miraculous. He believes all this, believes too much by far, and readily assumes such a skill in this doctor as no surgeon ever possessed. Nevertheless, he looks upon the visitor with unconcealed contempt and strides down the street conscious of his inestimable superiority over such a contemptible dog of an infidel.

As might be expected, these true believers do not consider themselves recipients of special favor because they are God's favorites. They conclude that they are actually the cream of the universe, essentially better than all other beings, demons, angels or men, because they have signified their acceptance of a philosophical concept. Such men want no instruction from the despised and contemptible infidel on subjects religious or secular. The pride and the intolerance thus developed can scarcely be matched in the world, and an almost immovable stagnation of society results. This intolerance and stagnation are made worse by the fact that Mohammedanism tends

to place all ethical values on outward appearances and ritual observances and ignores the motives that lie underneath. Religion comes to be a set of forms to be gone through with. They may be sincerely performed, but they have little value in shaping character because they make no demands on the worshipper's conscience.

A second inconsistency similar to the intolerant persecution of infidels is the inclusion of slavery in the Mohammedan system. Scarcely anything could be imagined more opposed to the genius of Mohammedanism than for one believer to be held as the chattel slave of another. To keep an infidel as a slave might be open to less theoretical objections, but as a matter of fact the slaves are all Mohammedans, indeed they are almost compelled to be. A pious Mohammedan takes great pains with the religious education of his slaves, especially of the slave children.

It is interesting to discuss the institution of slavery with earnest Mohammedans. Their progressive leaders frequently admit that slavery is inconsistent with the solidarity of Mohammedanism and apologize for it. Men of this type, however, are uncommon and such opinions are expressed in private. In public the institution enjoys all the prestige that entrenched privilege enjoys everywhere, and any criticism of it in the gatherings of the rich and the great calls forth the same horrified protests on the part of the beneficiaries of the present order as the advocacy of Bolshevism would produce in a Wall Street office. Religion endorses it, the social order depends upon it, and the welfare of the slaves themselves demands it. The Sheikh of Abu Dhabi once spent the best part of half an hour explaining to me that the slaves who were freed lived under conditions far

worse in every way than those they had enjoyed while still slaves. The secret visitors who came at night to my room asking for assistance in running away did not hold his opinion. Indeed the poor fishermen of Bahrein have a clearer view in the matter. It is not hard for them to see that slavery is an iniquity. Moreover, Mohammedanism itself in a curious way recognizes the evil of the system and makes it an act of great religious merit to purchase a slave and free him. This is frequently done, and all the Arab towns along the coast have their contingents of freed slaves.

But the treatment of infidels and slavery itself are trifles compared with the injustice of the Moslem treatment of women. Mohammedanism may fairly claim to have triumphed over race prejudice and to have created the greatest internationalism in the world. It has triumphed over social and religious inequality and stands forth as a casteless system. But its triumph is illusory and its whole conception of a democratic society is rendered practically valueless by the fact that the female half of the population holds almost the status of pariahs with practically no rights at all. The appetites and passions of men have triumphed over the philosophy of Mohammedanism, and the conquest has been complete. Women are recognized as possessing souls and may hope for a place in Heaven; there is no theoretical reason for considering them essentially inferior to men. But their position has not been fixed with reference to the religious philosophy of the Arab; it has been fixed by the strength of the lusts of his flesh.

The second question that the biologist asks regarding any institution of human society concerns this matter of

the sex relationships that it fosters. Such relationships have played a large part in the processes of organic evolution, and unquestionably they are a very important factor in the development of society now. The existence and spread of human life depend on our ability to extract subsistence from our external environment; progress depends on the relations between men and women in the propagation of the race. It is from the right sort of sex subsoil that we gain those ideals which make civilized man different from the savages—the ideal of truth, its majesty and power, and the necessity of bowing down to it wherever found, the ideal of beauty, its appreciation and the desire to create and develop it.

Socially Mohammedanism's worst failure is at this point. The Mohammedan system is nothing more nor less than unchecked promiscuity. It is true that the Bedouin community has remained monogamous in Arabia, but unforunately it is the indulgence of the oasis rather than the monogamy of the desert that tends to be carried by the system. Consequently women have almost no rights. A little girl may be married to a man of sixty. Her place is an inferior one, and she is frequently beaten. Her duty is obedience, no matter how weak-minded her husband or how impossible his demands. A few indulgent fathers have their daughters taught to read the Koran, but it would be fatal to a woman's reputation to know how to write. She might write a letter to some one other than her own husband. Infraction of the moral code is for her a capital crime. For the man it is a minor offense. There are exceptions, and again it is in the desert that we most frequently find them, but taken as a whole, family life in Arabia is a very unlovely

thing to see. The husband dominates over his wife. She is his plaything, his slave almost. She is divorced at her husband's whim, whereas only grave reason and legal process enable her to divorce him. All over Arabia a woman's brother is her protector against an unreasonable husband. Children are indulged and neglected. Disease is rife. Cleanliness is unknown. But it is not altogether just to say that the resulting degradation of society is shared by both men and women and that there is no desire for anything better. Free divorce, in the demoralized atmosphere of Mohammedan sex relationships, is popular with the men. It is not popular with the women. Some care must be exercised in interpreting motives under these circumstances, but there is no doubt at all that the Arab women dread divorce and that if they had their way, nine out of ten divorces would not take place.

The essence of this great evil of Mohammedanism is not in unlimited divorce nor even in polygamous relationships, but rather in that unqualified naturalism which the system teaches and which is universal in Arabia among Bedouins as well as all other Arabs. The relations of the sexes are reduced to the level of eating and drinking. A man enjoys a new sort of potatoes every day; why should he not enjoy a new wife every day? This attitude is the blight which Mohammedanism has carried with it everywhere.

It is obvious that personal character suffers irreparably under such a system, and that in both men and women. What is not quite so obvious at first sight is that all possibility of social progress is destroyed. Our civilization, such as it is, is built on the family. It is there that we have learned to coöperate to the small extent that

we are able to do so. That coöperation is doubtless very imperfect, but on it as a foundation has been built the whole structure of modern civilization and further advance waits for a better learning of that lesson. It is in the family that we have learned to treat each other as brothers, with some degree of love and forbearance. We have made only the most pitiful beginning, but even that little beginning is the most precious part of our present racial inheritance and the exact measure of our possible sociological advance.

Now the Arab has not learned those lessons, and therefore he cannot make much progress. Business partnerships in the bazaars of Arabia are almost unknown, for nobody can be trusted in a business partnership. Father and son may be in business together, or even brothers sometimes, but anything beyond that is rarely seen. The Arab knows that, however fair his partner's words, at the first opportunity he will rob him with no scruples whatever. In a community where such conditions prevail, modern civilization is not possible.

The Mohammedan has not learned these lessons because he has no home to learn them in. His mother, with whom he lives as a boy, is one, we will say, of four wives. Sometimes his father spends the night with her. If he makes a boast of his religious equality and justice in family life, he apportions his nights in strict rotation. The boy grows up in an atmosphere of intrigue and suspicion, the furthest possible remove from any idea of coöperation and brotherly love. The whole environment is charged with exaggerated sex desires, and at the age of twelve, he wants to get married. It is better that he should, for so worse evils are averted. He has no interest in education, nor have his parents any great interest

in it for him. He may learn to read the Koran and if he is especially fortunate he may go on to learn to write as well. But the home as we know it simply does not exist, and until it does, all hope for solid progress is futile.

CHAPTER XIV

THE RELIGION OF "WESTERN HEATHENISM"

NO description of the Arab is complete without some account of the influence of western civilization. Among the Wahabis of inland Arabia this influence has been very slight. There the dress and food, the habits and thoughts of the present inhabitants are much the same as they were in the days of Abraham. The West is to them a myth and a fable, much as a fairy tale is to us. Throughout Mesopotamia, on the contrary, and in the coast cities along the Persian Gulf the influence of the West has been very pervasive and powerful. As in many other parts of the Orient, there is not a department of life where its influence has not been felt.

We of the West understand less well perhaps than any other people on earth the nature of this tremendous structure that we have raised, a structure of thought and culture and achievement that towers above everything else on this earth as the Woolworth Building would tower above the goat's-hair tents of a Bedouin encampment. At home the structure is beautified by many lovely developments, but in the East it stands forth naked and powerful, and whatever other mistakes might be made concerning it, no one would be inclined to call it Christian. We have labelled it "western civilization," but that is a most inadequate designation. The East understands, if we do

not, that it is not simply a civilization; it is a religion, the most powerful heathen religion in the world today.

It is a religion in exactly the same sense that Buddhism or Mohammedanism is a religion. Mohammedanism is founded upon an underlying philosophy of the universe, a great overwhelming conception of God. Built upon this there are a system of ethics and a theory of human destiny, an organization of the family and a complete social structure. Thus religion in the Mohammedan's mind is not simply a series of doctrines concerning the relations between God and man. Every human and social relationship is included, every governmental and industrial organization, every physical and intellectual activity. Religion in the Arab's mind is a complete system of life.

The all-conquering heathenism from the West is a system just as complete as Mohammedanism. Its god is a ruthless, impersonal force, as unknowable and as heartless as a steam locomotive, a conception of God far inferior to that given to Arabia by Mohammed. Its sacred writings are the discoveries and conclusions of a materialistic science and a pantheistic philosophy. It is not to be wondered at that, as the new conception displaces the old in the mind of the Arab, he feels that every glimmer of moral obligation and every distinction between right and wrong disappear. Granted the premise, his conclusion is inevitable.

This western system is penetrating gradually into the farthest corners of Arabia. Once the Arab has come into contact with the outside world, once he is educated, the system appears to have much the same power over him that Mohammedanism shows over the primitive mind. None of the primitive religions is able to stand before



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THE OLD AND THE NEW

Mohammedanism, but Mohammedanism goes down before this irresistible system. Before the war it was a pathetic thing to talk with the Turkish officers who were sent into Mesopotamia as administrators. During the day, when there were many to listen, these men were ardent Mohammedans, but at night when no one was near, they were open converts to Western Heathenism, the religion of materialism and self-indulgence. The same process can be seen at work in Mesopotamia now. Contact with the great military and commercial power of the West has destroyed the faith of thousands in Mohammed and his system. That statement does not mean that they have become Christians. The Arab has a far poorer religion after the change, and a far worse character.

The power of the system lies first of all in its appeal to the mind. To the Arab who has any education at all or has come into any considerable contact with the outside world, its arguments seem absolutely conclusive and unanswerable. They need simply to be stated to carry conviction, and the more readily because the Arab has already seen enough of the world to undermine his confidence in his own religion. The great western system has penetrated the secrets of science. Out of the magic and fraud of alchemy it has erected the superb science of modern chemistry, perhaps its greatest single achievement. However imperfectly the Arab may understand the methods of science, its results are patent and obvious. Most of all he is impressed by the fact that this is no matter of black magic, but that the door to similar knowledge and achievement is open to any one who wishes to enter. He realizes that the new system does in actual truth possess the key to great stores of knowledge that make the imaginings of his best sages seem like the

vain gibberish of an infant. He learns that what has been done in chemistry has been done in astronomy and physics and in every other department of human knowledge. No man can question that the great system from the West brings with it an ability to investigate and understand truth, and particularly the realities of our external environment, that is overwhelming. That fact stands out like a mountain. Even the fanatical *Akhwan* of the inland Arabian deserts realize as much as that. The Arab mind is essentially an investigative and truth-loving mind, and for the finer spirits among the race the great fascination of the new system is the opportunity it offers all who are willing to pay the price of diligence and patience, to share these treasures of scientific truth.

But the greatest reason for the system's power over the Arab mind is not its vast stores of knowledge, but its actual control of the forces of nature. The great argument, after all, is not what the new system knows but what it can do. Great trains carrying hundreds of passengers are pulled from one side of a continent to the other at forty miles an hour. Enormous steamers cross the ocean at a speed no less remarkable, with a complement of crew and passengers equaling the population of a small Arab city. Office buildings stand forty stories high in New York. Automobiles are manufactured whose speed and endurance and comfort are such as no camel ever approached. A wireless station is erected in the Arab's coast city and he sends a message to his friend in Bombay. Things such as these are final arguments. A system that can control the external world in this manner must be in accordance with the eternal realities.

And this system does not waste itself in empty exhibitions of power. It ministers to human need and hu-

man pleasure. It clothes men better than they were ever clothed before and feeds them better food. They live in better homes, and the child of the poorest citizen has all the treasures of knowledge and opportunity that the system possesses spread out before him in a free educational system, so that nothing but his own incompetence and laziness need hold him back from any attainment whatever.

As for pleasure, who will enumerate the new appetites that have been discovered, together with the means for their gratification? Colors that no natural sources ever matched for brilliancy are produced in factories. Perfumes new and powerful and exhilarating are imported in quantity. Cloth of a fineness and texture that no hand loom ever approached can be bought in every shop. Receptions at night are illuminated by lamps that rival the sun's own brilliance. Foods of new varieties are produced. Not only can the palate be tickled by foods that are hot; there is also an infinite variety of ice creams that are cold. Previous to his acquaintance with the locomotive and the automobile the Arab scarcely knew either the appetite for speed or its gratification. Now he knows both. There is no system in the world that so ministers to pleasure and self-indulgence. It appeals to the Arab because it offers him what he wants above all things. He discovers new appetites to gratify and is given the means for their gratification.

The political power which inheres in the system is an even greater attraction. The military might of the western nations is the most outstanding fact of the present day, and the Arab smarts under a sense of inferiority and weakness. The feeling of equality with all the world is of the very fiber of his being, and there is nothing that he

resents more fiercely than being considered an inferior by any one. Unfortunately for his pride, there is nothing in the world more obvious just now than the fact of his very great inferiority both in military power and cultural advancement. The present fierce nationalism of Arabia and Mesopotamia is a reflection of this state of affairs. It is an effort to restore by violent assertion and brute force what is instinctively felt to have been temporarily lost. The increasing demand for western education in Mesopotamia is a more rational effort toward the same end, and will doubtless steadily increase as the present backward position of the Arab community becomes apparent to larger and larger numbers.

It is a remarkable fact that all over the East, and perhaps nowhere more than in Arabia, the war which served to demonstrate the pitiful weakness of the eastern nations, also produced such a fierce demand on their part for recognition as equals as the world never saw before. Thirteen years ago, when I first came into contact with the Arabs, any one of them was likely to assert cheerfully, "Just give us time, and the Mohammedans of the world will unite and conquer the whole of Christian Europe with no difficulty at all." It was the naïve assertion of easy and confident superiority. But the war was a great revelation, and now even the nomads of inland Arabia know that the whole strength of Arabia is like that of a company of grasshoppers in comparison with the military power of Europe. In those days there was no assertion of equality with the West. Superiors do not assert their equality with inferiors. The Arab has not been convinced of his inferiority; such a result would be beyond human imagination. But he certainly has been convinced

of his backward condition, and his reaction to that uncomfortable conviction has been violent.

The system from the West, then, would seem to have proved irresistible. The nomad of inland Arabia is feeling its charm, and the educated Arab of the towns has adopted it bodily as the only possible means of meeting the impact of the hated West, whose strength he thus hopes to equal. Nevertheless, the system has some very grave limitations and weaknesses.

In the first place, definite bounds are set to material progress in many sections by the non-productiveness of the land. In Arab communities, as elsewhere throughout the East, signs of material progress are increasingly in evidence. The effect of Westernism on the industrial life of the Arab has been most marked in Mesopotamia, but everywhere it has been perceptible. The bazaars of the Gulf ports are full of goods of European manufacture, and the people are gradually learning to demand many of the comforts and refinements of the West. But this progress is limited in its future possibilities by the actual productive wealth of the country. In the Gulf ports it is limited by the value of the pearl catch, for as we had occasion to observe in the chapter on Mesopotamia, only the amount of commodities that is sent out of a community can be brought in, and no commercial skill can make the pearl catch greater. So also in the interior of Arabia, if some increased supply of water for irrigation or stock watering can be discovered, large progress can be made commercially and even industrially, but in the absence of any such productive discovery it is hard to see the possibility of any substantial progress. Windmills and oil engines may improve matters a little, as also light motor

transport over the heavy sands of the interior country, but the only thing that can possibly produce any great result is more water to increase the crops that can be raised, or perhaps the discovery of some mineral wealth, of which there is now not the slightest prospect.

Thus the gifts that Westernism can bestow upon the Arab, even in the way of material progress, are limited in scope. When it comes to the more intangible things, its inadequacy is much more apparent. As to ethics, the western system knows no duty except the duty of self-indulgence and enjoyment. "Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost." This rule holds in personal relationships, in community life and above all in international diplomacy. However uncertain the Arab may be of the other elements of Western Heathenism, he is left in no doubt as to this. The great Powers of the West are gathered like a ring of vultures about China and Turkey and Russia and every other sick and dying nation in the world. Western business concerns practise this same doctrine. When the Standard Oil Company sent a cargo of kerosene up the Persian Gulf after the war, there was no inquiry as to the acute distress that had been caused in the community by the long deprivation of what had become almost a life necessity. There was no attempt to set the price as a fair remuneration for the labor of producing and transporting the commodity. The Company's instructions to its agent were an everyday example of the ethics of Western Heathenism: "Put the price up just as high as the market will bear."

The only human destiny that this system knows is pleasure, pleasure now, in the only existence that we know anything about. Any idea of future existence with re-



WESTERN CIVILIZATION

wards and punishments is scoffed at. Perhaps nowhere is the new system more flatly and uncompromisingly in opposition to the old than here. The Arab is fundamentally a religious man. Religion is the warp and woof of his life. And the whole genius of the Arab mind in religion lies along the line of interest in, and devotion to, the interests of the next world. In it human inequalities are to be levelled and human injustices corrected. Without it the universe has no moral meaning or consistency. But it is the genius of the new system to confine all thought and attention and effort to the affairs of this world. Moreover, religion, in the Arab mind and according to the genius of the race, demands a personal relation to a personal God. Such things the new system knows nothing about.

It is on this account that we already see in Arabia large numbers who have accepted the materialistic world-philosophy of the West at the same time observing carefully the forms, at least, of a personal religious faith. Such individuals represent a natural development which we may expect to see increase very markedly in the future. The human mind is capable of accommodating at one time very incompatible bedfellows, the Arab mind no less than our own. So we need not be surprised if the spread of western ideas concerning a materialistic universe, concerning the human authorship of the Koran, concerning organic and social evolution, leaves the various Mohammedan religious services as well attended as ever.

The western system is weak not only in its failure to provide for the satisfaction of the religous nature of the individual Arab; it is weak in that its system of sex relationships tends to deteriorate Arab society still further and to make progress out of the question. Only the

fact that Christianity has practically conquered heathenism in this field in the West has made our own progress possible. So far, the impact of the West on the East has pushed the level down rather than elevating it. Under the system of Western Heathenism sex relations follow an evenly balanced system of promiscuity more irregular and pernicious than that of Mohammedanism itself. Personal gratification and indulgence are the only considerations. Equal freedom of choice and of change are accorded to men and women, and so in theory the rights of women are better preserved than under Mohammedanism. The interests of the children, however, are far worse neglected, and on the whole the Mohammedan plan is infinitely preferable. Westerners who blatantly advocate and openly practise the typical sex indulgence of Western Heathenism are too often the type of men sent out to the isolated posts of the East on our commercial errands. The influence of the German commercial representatives in the Gulf before the war was especially pernicious. Germany at that time enjoyed great prestige. She was supposed to be the last word in military power and in scientific advancement. Many of her representatives were frank and unblushing in advocating and consistent in practising all the principles of unadulterated Western Heathenism.

It must be said, however, that the West sends out to Arabia not only this type of man but also the Christian family, and practically always the Arab has both to observe and study. The result is that in spite of the fact that we are frequently represented in the East by our worst elements and the average morality is far below what obtains at home, nevertheless even there the Christian type of family life is to be found standing out in

refreshing contrast to its heathen and Mohammedan environment. The political agents that represent Great Britain throughout the Persian Gulf and elsewhere in Arabia are a splendid case in point. They would not feel themselves flattered to be termed missionaries, but the powerful Christian apologetic of a pure and lovely family life has been carried by them into many places where no missionary has ever worked. Unfortunately, however, although this example of the Christian family is present, the Arab usually finds the path opened up by Western Heathenism easier.

Finally the social system of this Western Heathenism is an aristocracy, the worst in the world, the aristocracy of self-indulgence. It is an aristocracy first of power and then of pleasure. The ability of an individual to dominate over his fellow men and to utilize their labors for his own enjoyment and self-indulgence constitutes him one of the élite, a member of the ruling class. It is a sorry substitute that is thus offered to the Arab in the place of his own social system where every man in the desert is the equal of every one of his brothers, where men look on the indulgences of this world with contempt and find the high exercise of their spirits in Liberty, Equality, Fraternity and Hospitality.

But in spite of all these contagious evils that western civilization brings in its train, this impact of the West upon the East is inevitable, and even desirable. The blessings that modern science brings with it are for no nation alone. They belong to the whole world. Eventually we must hope that this new truth, and the new power that comes with it, will be organized and directed by Christianity rather than by the Western Heathenism which contends with Christianity for the possession of the

world. But any idea of isolating the East from the influence of the West is a futile dream, as impossible as to isolate her from our common atmosphere. The only possible question is that of method. How can the knowledge and progress and blessings of the West be best brought to the East and imparted to our brothers and sisters in that part of the world?

The whole effort to coerce the East into accepting Westernism is on trial, and the outcome is doubtful. Before the war it seemed inevitable that western civilization should swallow up everything and spread over the whole world. Since the war its progress has not been so satisfactory. The imperialistic ambitions of Germany and Russia have been abandoned completely, and those of France and Great Britain have been materially modified. They are too expensive. Turkey has thrown back western civilization from parts of the Near East, and no one knows how far this movement will go. What would be for the best throughout the East is obscure enough. What is going to happen is absolutely beyond conjecture. As the Arab puts it, "The future is in the hands of God."

CHAPTER XV

THE ARAB AND CHRISTIANITY

THE globe trotter sees the Arab as a hopelessly dirty individual and his community as a hopelessly primitive stagnant society, in which even the desire for improvement is lacking. The man who has lived in Arabia long enough to see things as they are has a very different viewpoint. The society in which he is immersed and which he has come to love is made up of men and women of abilities equal to his own. In some ways they are his superiors. In gifts of personality they stir his deepest admiration. More loyal friends are to be found nowhere. Nothing should be impossible for such men and for a society made up of them.

But on prolonged acquaintance nothing is more obvious than the fact that many things are impossible for them. In the days of Abraham the inhabitants of Arabia lived the same lives and ate presumably the same food, wore the same clothes and thought the same thoughts as they do today. Their store of knowledge has not increased. Their appreciation of beauty is no finer. The satisfaction afforded by their contracted and poverty-bitten lives is no greater now than it was then. It is not that progress has been slow. There has been no progress. We have discussed the causes for this stagnation in previous chapters, and it is not necessary to elaborate upon the subject again. From their environment, from their racial endowment,

from their religion, these men have gained such a conceit, such an impenetrable self-satisfaction, as makes them not only perfectly content with their present condition but impatient of all suggestions of change. From the fiery depths of their nature, with the acquiescence and endorsement of their religion, they have been overcome and wrecked by sex appetite. It is these two things that have destroyed personal character and chained society down at a level nearly as low as that of African savages.

If there is one thing that seems absolutely certain it is this, that the men and women of Arabia need something that will change, not their external environment, but their own inner selves. Meeting the situation by a mere improvement of external environment or by education which makes that environment more plastic under their hands is futile. The real needs of the Arab are the softening of that limitless self-satisfaction and conceit which shut him out from all sorts of progress, and a control over his tremendous sex appetite strong enough to change that endowment from an almost hopeless handicap into a source of inestimable power. Now the missionary believes that Christ came to the world for just that purpose and that He is as able to do this for the Arab as He has proved Himself able to do it for us. It is Christ's teaching and example and His power and companionship that have given us such freedom as we enjoy and such power for coöperation and progress as our very imperfect society has exhibited. There may be those who deny Christ's ability to transform men and women into His own image, but no one who is acquainted with the Arab and with Arab society can question that just such a transformation is the Arab's one need, without which his future is almost hopeless.

The missionary is not simply certain that the Arab needs Christ; he also feels confident that Christ is adequate for the needs of Arabia. He believes that Christ's contribution to his own life has been made not to those superficial fractions of his personality in which he differs from the Arab and the Chinese and the Indian, but rather to those fundamental elements of his soul which are alike in all men, and that it is therefore essentially just as well fitted to the Arab as to the Westerner. This conviction deepens as his acquaintance with the Arab increases. There is something in the simplicity and sincerity of the Arab character, especially that of the desert Bedouin, which corresponds most beautifully with the utter simplicity and contempt of subterfuge which marked Christ's character and teachings. Some time it will be realized that the Arab's character is far more closely adapted to the teachings of Christ than is our own. In the intensity of his religious nature, too, the Arab is a much more promising subject than is the Westerner. With all the opportunities that we have enjoyed, religion is one of life's trifles to most of us. Whatever bad things are to be said of the Arab, that is not one of them.

The missionary enterprise does not aim to supplant modern education; it aims to supply the only foundation which will make that education effective. It does not oppose the introduction of modern civilization into non-Christian lands such as Arabia, but works instead to create a personal character that will make possible the development of a civilization that shall be at the same time modern and indigenous—a development of the racial endowment of the Arab, and not built on its destruction. American missionaries are not trying to westernize the

Arab; their whole effort is pointed in exactly the opposite direction. We hope to see the Arab a better Oriental, a more uncompromising Arab and a keener nationalist as a Christian than he was before. We do not want to change his food, or his clothes, or his house. We do not want to alter his modes of thought. We are not trying to revise his social structure. It is true that Arab society will have to be revised, but that is no part of our task. It is not adequately realized how futile and childish is the notion that we can go out to an oriental country and usefully direct any task of social reconstruction. In his enthusiastic conceit, the Westerner is apt to imagine himself competent to revise the social order of the world. There are a good many things that might be said about such an idea. One of them is that a little better success in correcting our own imperfections at home would add to the world's confidence in our skill. But that is not the real reply. The only men competent to revise the social order in China are the Chinese. The only ones competent for that task in India are the Indians. The only men who can be trusted to do it for Arabia are the Arabs. The less help those men get from the West, the better off they will be.

The missionary's contribution is thus a very simple contribution. He is not interested in widening the boundaries of any western church. He does not expect that the Christianity which will eventually take root in Arabia will develop along the lines that it has followed in America. He does not care what form it takes, except that it be a natural and indigenous form. The missionary carries the teaching and the example of Christ. He believes that this simple contribution is sufficient to redeem the individual Arab from powerful appetites and

from impenetrable conceit and to place the Arab race on the road toward a modern indigenous civilization that will be one of the finest in the world's history.

In spite of its geographical proximity to the birthplace of the Christian religion, Arabia has remained for the most part strangely untouched by nineteen centuries of Christianity. The explanation of this fact is not so difficult as might at first be supposed. The history of missionary work in Arabia begins with the visit of the Apostle Paul, which is mentioned in the Epistle to the Galations. Where he went or what he did, we do not know, nor is there any reason to suppose that a church was founded at that time. It is probable that he saw only the northernmost part of Arabia and went more as a visitor than as a Christian worker. Neither in ancient nor in modern times has any trace been found of work done by him on this visit. The tremendous vitality and missionary zeal of the early Christians, however, did not overlook so close a neighbor, and in 325 A. D. six Arabian bishops are mentioned as present in the Nicene Council. The northern Arab tribe of Ghassan appears to have become quite completely Christian during these early centuries. Palmyra, a city whose ruins still remain in the northern part of the Syrian desert, was one of the centers of Christianity in Arabia during this time.

To the south an even stronger foothold was gained in Yemen, and by the end of the fifth century Christianity was the official religion of the province. It was not strictly an indigenous faith, for it was associated with the political domination of that part of the peninsula by the king of Abyssinia. In Sanaa, the capital city, there was built a great cathedral whose foundations have endured to this day. About the time of Mohammed's birth, war

broke out between this Abyssinian ruler and the powerful tribe of the Koreish, whose capital was at Mecca. An ill-advised expedition against Mecca was successful at first, but afterwards in the mountain defiles close to the city, the Yemen army was cut to pieces. The power of the Christian government in Sanaa was broken by this defeat, and fifty years later the tremendous flood of Mohammedanism washed away the last traces from that corner of Arabia.

Nothing is known definitely of any other significant center of Christianity in Arabia during these early days. The peninsula as a whole appears to have been quite untouched. The inhabitants of Oman, however, point out to travelers certain caves which they say were the abodes of monks and Christian hermits in the "days of ignorance," that is in the time before Mohammed. Certain mosques, too, they are sure were Christian churches long ago. We may eventually find that a third center of Arabian Christianity existed in Oman in the pre-Islamic days.

The most melancholy part of this chapter of Christian history is not the fact that these churches were later wiped out by Mohammedanism, but rather the inferior nature of the churches that thus disappeared. Christianity made no greater headway against the local idolatries of that time because it was so mixed with idolatry and selfishness and corrupt beliefs and practices that there was no reason why it should. To the Semitic mind loosely attached to an unsatisfactory idolatry, real Christianity should have made a very great appeal. Unfortunately it was not real Christianity that was offered to Arabia at that time. It was an alternative idolatry.

Exactly what might have been expected happened. A

religion suddenly appeared which was adapted to the Semitic mind, which repudiated idolatry and insisted on an uncompromising monotheistic faith. The idolatrous and inconsistent Christianity of the peninsula disappeared before the great flood just like the other idolatries. To-day no trace of it is left. The mere strength of Mohammedanism is hardly an adequate explanation of that complete disappearance. Further north, in Asia Minor, Christianity did not completely vanish under similar circumstances. In Mesopotamia, Zoroastrianism has persisted in a small community to the present day. The reason why nominal Christianity disappeared when the religion of Mohammed was introduced was that real Christianity had disappeared long before.

It was about seven hundred years after the establishment of Mohammedanism as the dominant religion of Arabia that a missionary of the Christian Church first began work for Moslems. Raymon Lull, the famous Catalan mystic, died as a martyr in North Africa in 1315. His was a voice crying in the wilderness. So far as we can tell, there were no permanent results from his brief missionary career, either in the establishment of Christianity among the Mohammedans of Africa or in the awakening of a corrupt and degenerate church in Europe. It was five hundred years more before the church roused herself to any real effort for Mohammedans. Henry Martyn, previously a missionary to India, worked among the Arabs in 1812, and although it is not possible to point to any permanent results of his activity, he was the pioneer in an effort that has steadily gathered momentum since and is now one of the church's major missionary projects.

Baghdad has been the commercial and political center

of Mesopotamia and northern Arabia for centuries, and there missionary work was first begun. Throughout the first eighty years of the last century there was a succession of workers in that city, and in 1882 the Church Missionary Society, a British organization, opened up permanent medical and evangelistic work there. However, the outstanding figure of this period, the man who comes next in the honor roll after Raymon Lull and Henry Martyn, is Cornelius Van Dyck of Syria, who in 1865 completed an Arabic translation of the Bible which for purity and accuracy stands as a classic. It has been the foundation of missionary work in Arab countries ever since.

About thirty years after the completion of Van Dyck's translation, Ion Keith-Falconer began work in Yemen as a medical missionary under the Free Church of Scotland. He lived to do only a few months' work, dying in 1887, but his judgment as to the best way to reach the Mohammedans has been followed and Sheikh Othman, the mission station which he founded just outside Aden, has been a center of light ever since. At present it has a large and flourishing medical work as well as an active evangelistic staff. Thus it was the Scotch Free Church that began the work in the Arabian peninsula itself, but the brunt of the campaign was not to be borne by the Scotch. In 1889 the Arabian Mission was founded in America. It began as an independent project but from the first had close ties with the Reformed Church and was later taken into that body as one of its official missions. The Arabian Mission had as its object the prosecution of missionary work in the whole peninsula, and it was the original intention to begin work both on the Red Sea coast and on the shores of the Persian Gulf. Thus



THE KUWAIT MISSION SCHOOL



A COLPORTEUR AT WORK

far a limited staff has kept its effort confined to the East Coast.

At about this same time Bishop Thomas Valpy French of the Church of England, who had done pioneer service as the first bishop of Lahore, started work in Muscat, the seaport city of Oman. There is something heroic in the splendid effort of that veteran missionary, then an old man, to establish missionary work in the almost impossible field of Muscat. Like Keith-Falconer's, his service lasted only a few months, and in 1891 he died. His grave is in a barren rocky cove near Muscat, the city of his last love. His own church did not feel able to follow up the work which he began, and his mantle fell on the American project.

This organization, known officially as "the Arabian Mission," has been at work for thirty-three years. Since the Great War the Church Missionary Society, hard pressed with other responsibilities, has withdrawn from Baghdad, and thus the entire task of carrying the Christian message to the Arabs devolves upon the Arabian Mission together with the somewhat weaker mission of the Scotch Free Church founded by Keith-Falconer. The American Mission, after many vicissitudes in its early days, has grown until its missionaries now number thirty-six and include medical, educational and evangelistic workers for both men and women.

The task of the missionary is a simple task, and his methods are simple methods. In the days when I was studying Arabic, I once learned a great deal about missionary method in a very few minutes. As part of my language work I was taking a two weeks' trip in a *mahclla,* or river sail boat, on the Tigris River. The captain and I came to be very good friends. One day

he turned to me during some conversation and, speaking with great emphasis, banged with his fist on the deck. "You," he said, "you, we have no great objection to you, but the English, we hate the English."

"So," I mildly inquired, "why do you hate the English?"

"Oh," he repeated, "we hate them."

"Yes," I replied, "I understood what you said the first time you said it, but why do you feel that way about them?"

"We hate them," said he, "because they treat us like dogs."

I knew the man well and I took up the debate with some warmth. "That is not true and you know it. They do not treat you like dogs. When they have a chance, they furnish you with a good government. As business men they do not cheat you."

His reply was a good deal of a surprise. "We know all that. We know it better than you do. They do not accept bribes as government officials. As business men they are honest. They do not run away with other men's wives. But," and here he pounded on the deck with his fist once more, "we hate them just the same."

"What is the matter with you?" I asked. "What makes you feel so?"

My friend then softened his indictment, softened it in content but not at all in intensity. "We hate them because they think they are better than we are. They look down on us."

Unfortunately that was a statement that could not be denied. Whether it is Great Britian in Mesopotamia or ourselves in the Philippines, the essence of colonial administration is the division of humanity into two castes,

an upper caste which rules and a lower caste which is ruled. It is no part of the purpose of this book to outline correct policies for colonial government, but of one thing we can be certain, missionary work cannot be done in any such way. We have emphasized a great many things in preparing candidates for missionary work; the most important thing of all is rarely mentioned. As far as method is concerned, the one essential is keeping ourselves and our message free from any taint of race prejudice and race pride and approaching the Arab on the level of simple democratic equality.

That same trip afforded an excellent example of the point under discussion. The boatmen were Shiah Mohammedans. The Shiah is less fanatical than some other Mohammedans in many things, but in the matter of eating with infidels he is the most extreme of all. There are no knives and forks and spoons on such a trip. Men eat with "the five," that is the five fingers, and they would almost as soon a dog came and put his nose into the common dish as that a filthy infidel Christian put his hand in. At that time I was beginning the study of Arabic, and the customs and state of mind of my hosts were a closed book. All I knew was that my food was served on a separate tin dish off in one corner. I concluded that this was a special honor because they considered me too good to eat with them. I did not know enough Arabic to explain that I desired no such honor and so I had no choice but to eat out of my small tin dish.

But my chance came one day when we tied up at a small village along the river bank and after exploring the town I came back on board just at the time of the evening meal. The men were sitting down to a savory dish of Arab bread and gravy. As I passed the group

one of them said with the utmost cordiality, *"Bismillah tafaddul,"* meaning, "Sit down and eat with us." Now the correct thing to do, of course, was to decline courteously and go off to eat by myself in the corner. But I did not know that, and accepted the invitation with alacrity. Of the dozen men around the great dish only one rose to leave as I sat down. By the time that I landed in place, I think he was six inches off the ground. The rest of the men laughed at him. "You do not want to eat with the *Sahib?* All right, go off and eat by yourself, then. We will eat with him." And we had a most cordial meal together. All the religious bigotry and fanaticism and carefully nurtured prejudices of a thousand years had been wiped out by the simple democratic friendship of a week.

Many of the peninsular Arabs are very fanatical; in this regard the equal of the inland tribes could hardly be found anywhere, but I have never met an Arab who was immune to this approach, never one with whom it was not possible to be friends inside of a week or ten days. Perhaps the most intractable specimen that we ever treated in the Bahrein Hospital remained frozen in his shell of dignity and hostility for ten days. He was operated on for hernia and during the first week would scarcely speak to any one. If a missionary came into the far corner of the room where he, along with half a dozen other patients, was lying, he considered it necessary to protect both his eyes and ears from pollution. He would sit there as long as the objectionable presence was in the room, his back to the intruder, repeating an orthodox religious phrase, *"Istighfar allah, istighfar allah* (Beg forgiveness of God)." Sometimes I would remain a long time conversing with one of the other patients just to see if I could

wear him out, but he always wore me out and invariably I left him actively protecting himself. He would converse with no one. I had operated on him and it might be supposed that he would talk with the doctor. But he wouldn't. "Are you all right this morning?" A grunt of assent. "Any pain today?" Brief grunt of negation. A man with the smallpox he would not have considered half so dangerous. Finally, however, during his second week we became good friends, and just before his discharge he even volunteered his services as the official guide of the infidel doctor's caravan on a proposed trip into his own country. The offer meant personal unpopularity. It meant being called "Infidel" and "Dog" by all the little girls of his tribe. It meant that the little boys would throw stones as he went by. It meant that the men would turn their faces away as he passed and say *"Bismillah el rahman el rahim,"* or "There goes that filthy dog who is servant to the infidel." It might easily mean personal danger. Weeks and months would pass before he would be restored to his place in society.

There are no finer friends in the world than Arabs, and I have yet to meet an Arab who cannot be won as a friend if he is approached on the basis of simple democratic friendship. But this is not always an easy thing to do. It means inviting Arab friends to enjoy one's hospitality whenever the occasion offers and accepting their own invitations in return. A caravan traveling through the desert in the winter starts out from its night camp two hours before the sun gets up and travels steadily for the whole day. Half an hour before sunset the caravan leader selects a place for the next night's camp where fuel is available. Every one brings his camel up to the camping spot, and after dismounting and removing the camel's

load, each rider starts out to hunt for fuel. One brings back some dry weeds; another finds a few dry twigs on a discouraged, stunted tree in the distance; another some dried camel manure, the remains of a previous encampment. Soon there is a fine bonfire. But there is one man who does not go off to hunt for fuel. He is the caravan cook, and it is his duty to make baking powder biscuits for supper. He takes his saddle upon which he has been riding all day, a thick, hairy piece of goatskin, and turns it wrong side up on the sand. This puts the hair side down and the skin side up. He beats it in the middle with his fist, and thus makes a dish out of it. Into this dish is poured a certain amount of flour and a certain number of cups of water, and the whole is kneaded into a dough and patted into the shape of a large pancake, the size of a large dinner plate and an inch or an inch and a quarter thick. It is just as nice and light as a brick or a paving stone. The bonfire has burned down to ashes by this time and the baking powder biscuit is put into these ashes and left to bake for perhaps twenty minutes. Then it is taken out and kneaded a second time with some clarified butter and a few dates, or it may be eaten as it is without this second kneading.

Now, of course, if the missionary prefers, he can sit off by himself and eat a sardine out of a tin can, granted that he has a tin can along with a sardine in it, but the way to get acquainted with the Arab is to sit in the circle around the fire and eat what he eats and enjoy it. A little Bohemianism of soul is almost a necessity for a missionary in Arabia. It may be necessary to pray for a zinc-lined and copper-riveted stomach. If so he prays for it. After the first course of baking powder biscuits is finished, a bonbon course may be served. Roasted lo-

custs do not look very appetizing. Indeed they look very much otherwise, but they taste better than they look. We do not have roasted locusts every year in Arabia, but when we have them, we have lots of them, and they are likely to be served on every occasion. In such years the locusts may come over the country in great clouds and the sun be obscured by them for two or three days. Wherever they alight they eat up every green thing, leaving the ground as bare as a cement walk. A strong wind drifts these locusts much as it would drift dead leaves, and the desert nomads go out and gather them by the bushel, indeed by the ton. They are roasted in ordinary Arab ovens and are for sale in every bazaar in that part of the country. And when roasted locusts are served, the thing to do is to eat roasted locusts. The man next to him has taken twelve, so the missionary takes six. A roasted locust is seized amidships. His wings are pulled off, as also his bony hind legs. Nobody eats them. His head is pulled out by the roots, and what remains is eaten. It tastes much better than it sounds. Much better than raw oysters, I am sure.

After the evening meal is finished, there is an opportunity for stories, and quite certainly, as each one in the circle contributes his yarn, the missionary will be asked for a story too. "You have listened to stories from our country,—tell us a story from your country." It is well to have a story ready for just such emergencies. One which I frequently use concerns an old colored man in the South whose friend died. At the request of relatives he sat up with the corpse. It was a hot night and so he decided to sit outside in the open air next to the kitchen. There had been a balloon ascension in a town not far from there, and the wind coming up suddenly had blown

the balloon away from its moorings. As the aviator sailed over the country he hung out an anchor in the hope of catching a house or a tree or something of the sort. The anchor caught up the colored man sitting just outside the kitchen, and he was carried off through the air praying in great terror, "Oh Lord, it ain't me, it ain't me—the corpse is inside, the corpse is inside." Many an Arab camp out under the stars of the desert has voted that a first-class story. No one believes it. True stories are not expected around a camp fire of that sort. Such a rule would cramp the prevalent style hopelessly. But it has served many times as an acceptable contribution to the evening's entertainment.

This approach on the basis of simple, unaffected, democratic equality is ninety per cent of missionary method. Associating with the Arabs in this way, you may easily meet them and have them meet you as warm friends, and many details take care of themselves. The Arab is not concerned about foreign clothes. He is not anxious that we should live in houses that resemble his own. He emphasizes these external things as little as we. What he wants is a genuine feeling of equality, a genuine freedom from that attitude of haughty superiority which is so common among Westerners as to be almost universal.

In the missionary's search for a method of bringing Christ and His message to the Arab, this friendliness is the first and most important step. It is by means of genuine contact of one friend with another that the Arab is brought into contact with Christ. This spirit underlies the entire program of the Arabian Mission. More specifically the work of the Mission is divided into three distinct tasks. The first is the penetration of territory and the establishment of mission stations throughout the

peninsula. We are still confined to the East Coast, and thus far it has been impossible to secure the necessary permission to establish missionary work in the inland cities. Arabia will never be evangelized by missionaries located along the coast. We must gain an entrance inland and carry Christ's message to the entire country.

It should be emphasized that it is not the caprice of rulers, neither indigenous Arab sheikhs nor Turkish and British deputies, that prevents our entrance. Until very recently practically the whole population of the inland country was fanatically determined to keep us out. The missionary has no weapons to force an entrance except prayer and friendly service. He is not able, nor does he wish, to enter a place until he is invited. So the method of procedure has been to work out from a base hospital and school and evangelistic station on the coast and gradually so to commend ourselves to the people that our presence inland is desired. This has been a slow method, but time has demonstrated its wisdom. Moreover, it is the only possible method. It is almost past imagination that a missionary could persuade a local Turkish administrator to compel an unwilling population to accept his presence and work. It is even less possible with a British administrator. Frequently, long after the people would welcome a medical missionary with cordiality, the more timid civil administrator refuses to permit the missionary's residence in the country in question. It is sometimes difficult to be properly patient under such circumstances, but as always the man who can wait is the man who wins. The people get what they want in Arabia. No ruler in the world shows a greater sensitiveness to the popular will than the Arab sheikh, and Turkish or British administrators are sure to hear that voice eventually and to obey its

mandate. So the Mission's policy has been to gain the good will of the people by steady thorough medical work, by educational institutions and by a quiet uncompromising evangelistic campaign. There has never been any effort to enlist a particle of government assistance. No Arab chief has ever felt that refusal to admit the missionary would compromise his position with any western Power, or work to his detriment commercially to the smallest degree. Carried on in this way, the Mission's progress in gaining an entrance to the inland country has not been rapid, but it has been steady and there have been no withdrawals after entrance because of hostile public sentiment.

The second task of the Mission is overcoming prejudice and misunderstanding and gaining a hearing. Our task is only begun when we secure permission to establish work in a new city or province. The people value medical work and it is that which most frequently opens new territory. A little later they learn to value educational work. Even the evangelistic missionary is eventually made welcome because of his obvious good intentions and practical benevolence. But the missionary is there for a definite purpose. He desires to bring Christ's message to these people. Once he is established, his whole object is to get them to listen to it and understand it.

This is a task of years. In accomplishing it our most powerful instrument is the example of Christian family life lived in full view of the people. It must be a family life which all can see and in which they can participate through the give and take of neighborly hospitality. I have talked with many Arabs and found them exceedingly averse to conceding that anything western could be supe-

rior to their own system, but I think I have never talked with an Arab who did not admit the superiority of our family system and family life to his own. Here is a woman who has never been beaten by her husband. Nevertheless, she is faithful and devoted to him. Here is a man who orders his household well. He has but one wife and a creditable number of children. Some of them are boys. His wife walks with him in the street and even precedes him when they go single file. Gradually there develops a willingness to listen to what such strangers have to say, even on matters of religion.

Next to the influence of the missionaries' family life, the most effective means of getting acquainted is the work of the mission hospitals. In the days of the Baghdad Caliphs Arabia had the best medicine in the world, but that was a long time ago. Arabia has no medical profession now; men and women and children sicken and die with only such relief as motherly or sisterly or wifely affection can furnish. In such circumstances the work of a well-conducted hospital makes a tremendous impression. The doctor gives instructions as to boiling water, cooking food, fly protection, and a cholera epidemic stops as suddenly as if a miracle had occurred. Men come to the hospital with a strangulated hernia or with some acute abdominal condition and are brought back from the very jaws of death. Friends look on while tumors are removed from the abdomen with no pain and prompt recovery follows. There is no controverting an apologetic of that sort.

If the doctor can add to his professional skill an unfailing human sympathy and personal interest and a simple, unaffected, democratic approach, he becomes almost irresistible. The Arab responds not simply with respect

but with sincere admiration and warm regard. There is practically no door that such a physician cannot enter. He can present and explain Christ's teachings to every one of his hospital patients. He can associate on terms of friendly equality even with the fanatical *Akhwan*. In twelve years' experience I have never met a patient with whom it was impossible to do this sort of personal Christian work. Old patients from our hospitals are vigorous defenders of the missionary's good name everywhere. As a man once assured me, "Even if you are infidels you are still good people." To be received enthusiastically in a strange and hostile town by a friend and former hospital patient is an experience that warms the cockles of one's heart.

The method of the missionary is simple, unaffected, democratic equality; his message is the example and teachings of Christ with no adulterations from the West mixed into it. Thus defined, missionary work seems a very simple thing. It is simple, but the question of how to present the message is sometimes very difficult. There has been far too little effort to determine the best method of presenting Christ's message to the Arab mind. In 1907 a very striking book appeared from the pen of Dr. Warneck of the South Sea Islands, entitled, "The Living Christ and the Dying Heathenism." As the result of twenty years' study and work Dr. Warneck decided that the best way to present the Christian message to the people of his field was to call their attention to the fact that one who follows Christ does not have to be afraid of evil spirits. This may seem a somewhat abbreviated Gospel, but as an introductory contact it was the most effective that he was able to discover. Such a contact promised us nothing in Arabia, for the orthodox Arabs

are not particularly afraid of evil spirits, but the book did afford a very useful idea. What is the best way to present Christ to the Arabs? No one seemed to know, so we decided to try to find out.

We copied hospital methods. The religious services in the hospital ward were discontinued and we changed the program to personal work with the individual patients every day. A record was kept after the medical fashion. In a good hospital every patient is interviewed on admission and his personal history, as well as the progress of his symptoms, is carefully noted. This history covers everything from the inception of the disease to the time of entrance. Then there is a thorough examination and after a diagnosis is established, treatment is undertaken. Each day's treatment is recorded and also the patient's reaction to it.

For each of our hospital patients we made out a second history, his religious history. On admission he was carefully interviewed. The locality from which he came was ascertained and also his type of Mohammedanism. How much contact had the patient had with Christianity? Usually, of course, none at all. Then his treatment was undertaken. We tried every presentation of Christ's teachings and example that we knew. The systematic presentation,—the conception of sin and of man's need of a Saviour; the conception of God's holiness. We tried the historical presentation,—the prophecies concerning Christ; his birth and life and teachings; his death and resurrection. We tried the parables. We had great hope for the parables. They seemed to have been given for just such cases as our Arabs. Each day's presentation was carefully recorded, together with the reaction of the patient to it. March 17th, we will say, Abdullah ibn

Khalid had presented to him the Parable of the Prodigal Son. How did he react? Did he enjoy it or was he annoyed by it? Did it interest him? Did it make him angry or, indeed, did it so far fail to interest him that he went to sleep trying to listen?

At the end of the year we had some very interesting records to study. We anticipated that something like his own very mechanical and ultra-Calvanistic philosophy would appeal best to the Arab but we could find no evidence that it did so. The historical presentation seemed to be no more effective. Even the parables that we had anticipated would be so acceptable seemed to fail us. We did find one aspect of the Gospel, however, that apparently had a real appeal, namely the mystical element in Christ's teachings,—"I am the bread of life," in the sixth chapter of John; "I am the true vine and my Father is the husbandman," in the fifteenth; and especially the tenth chapter of John with its Parable of the Good Shepherd. So now, as far as is possible, we try to present that aspect of Christian truth to the men whom we meet, and comprehension and appreciation on their part have increased enormously.

We learned something else from the study. We learned that if the missionary meets a Bedouin fresh from the desert who has never seen a white man before, to say nothing of having come into any previous contact with Christianity, and if the missionary gives such an Arab a digest of the Westminster Catechism in ten minutes, the Bedouin fails to get it. A moderately obvious sort of thing, no doubt, but it is surprising how long it takes some of us to see obvious things.

So now the Arab who comes into the Bahrein Hospital is treated along these two lines. He has presented to him

the mystical aspect of Christ's teachings, and he has the same material presented over and over day after day, for probably his entire hospital stay. Abdul Karim ibn Abdur Rahman, we will say, comes into the hospital and is operated upon for hernia, which is our commonest operation. Within three days he is comfortable and delighted to have the doctor come and talk to him. The first day Abdul Karim hears the Parable of the Good Shepherd, if that is the presentation chosen for him, and the second day the same, and the third, and the fourth, and every day of the ten days more or less remaining before his discharge. He is given nothing else.

Christ's teaching gains in this way a splendid response from even the most primitive Bedouin. His eyes light up at the doctor's approach. "Sit down," said one of them to me after perhaps ten days of such instruction, "and I will tell you the story." And he told it in a way that quite put the missionary in the shade—how Christ desires to be a shepherd to all who are willing to follow Him; how He leads His followers out into such experiences and such hardships as are for their own development, just as the shepherd leads out the sheep to places where they can get nice green grass to eat and nice clean water to drink; how He protects them from the sins of their own hearts and the temptations of the world outside just as the shepherd protects his sheep from the wolves of the desert and the thieves of the towns; and just as the shepherd leads home the sheep when the day is over, so Christ when the sunset of life comes is anxious to lead us to the Father's house. No one who has tried it can doubt the effectiveness of such a presentation, and if it seems that the method limits severely the amount of material presented, all that can be said is that a good

deal of Christ's essential message can be found in the Parable of the Good Shepherd and that it accomplishes less to get a great deal into a man's ears than to get a little into his heart.

The third and ultimate task of the missionary in Arabia is to guide those earnest men and women who desire to follow Christ into a real fellowship with Him. This is not an easy task anywhere in the world and it is doubly difficult in Arabia. For the converted Mohammedan persecution is severe, and no one who lacks a definite and intense conviction can weather the storm. It was feared that some of the Arab Christians would be killed, but thus far no such tragedy has happened. In some cases, however, it has been necessary to transfer such a Christian to a city far from his home to lessen the pressure of persecution. He is comparatively safe in a strange city, for although abandoning Mohammedanism is theoretically a capital crime, his own relatives, who are the ones personally disgraced by his defection, are far away. No one in the city where he now lives is personally concerned and therefore no one is interested in seeing that the law is enforced. Doubtless he is a traitor to the faith and ought to be killed, but killing such a man is a disagreeable and inconvenient job, and as long as leaving him alive brings no loss of prestige, no one is anxious to do away with him. In time such a man, living as a genuine Christian, commends himself to his neighbors and their respect protects him still further. Probably the only thing that would expose a Christian of long standing to danger would be some outbreak of mob violence such as results in massacres occasionally in Turkey.

Earning a living, however, is another matter. Until

recently it has presented an almost insoluble problem. No one will buy from such a man or sell to him. No one has any work to offer him. Society automatically shuts down on the hapless Christian, and without the active assistance of the missionary he would starve to death. This is not because any powerful Mohammedan organization exists for the purpose of boycotting him. It happens because the people of the community unanimously disapprove of his action, and he becomes a pariah. The missionary's aid consists of employment rather than charity, of course, but even so the problem is not easy, for almost without exception the Arab is ill-trained for any work that the missionary can offer, and making the new Christian's spiritual adviser also his employer is far from an ideal arrangement.

Since the war, trade and industry have developed greatly in Mesopotamia, and it was hoped that converts might be able to find employment there outside of mission circles. To some extent this hope has been realized, but the essence of the difficulty is not met even then. The problem of the individual's earning a living may be satisfactorily solved, but the task of establishing indigenous communities of Christians in Arab lands is far from accomplishment. What we must work for and pray for and plan for is a group of Arab Christians who shall be an integral part not of the foreign settlement in a port city but of the Arab community itself. Individual and racial redemption are both bound up in the establishment of such a community. On the whole, very encouraging progress toward that goal has been made within recent years. It has been possible to establish mission stations along the whole East Coast. By means of medical tours friendship with the interior has

been developed, and probably it will soon be possible to carry our message to the entire peninsula. Prejudice has been overcome, and the missionaries enjoy the cordial good will and fellowship of all classes in practically every station where they reside. Standards of social and family life are beginning to rise. Best of all, there has been a growing interest in the message and the Christian services of the stations are attended by increasing numbers. Kuwait has a regular attendance of seventy-five and Bahrein of perhaps fifty. There are from six to ten earnest Christians whose faithfulness and enthusiasm are a promise of better things to come. As yet these are isolated individuals scattered through the half-dozen stations occupied by the Mission. The next step will be an increase in the number of these Christians up to the point where they can form small groups and thus gain the strength and community efficiency that group life will bring. When that point is reached, perhaps half of the Mission's work will have been accomplished.

But there is no limit to the goal that the Mission sets itself. The missionary to Arabia works for the redemption of the individual Arab and of the entire Arab race, but his hope and vision go beyond even that. It was the mind of the Arab that gave Mohammedanism to the world—a faith whose outlines are at once so simple and so magnificent that it carries immediate conviction to the primitive mind everywhere and satisfies the religious desires of millions of primitive people as no other faith has been able to do. The Christian missionary dreams of the day when that same Arab mind shall study and interpret Christ's message so profoundly and simplify it

so completely that we shall see it commanding the acquiescence of the primitive mind and the devotion of the primitive heart to a degree greater than Mohammedanism has ever done. The complexity of our present Christianity is a western product. The missionary knows that fundamentally it has a simplicity and a magnificence far greater than Mohammedanism. He knows that it provides a direct contact with God, an individual responsibility to Him and a call to devoted service that go beyond anything that Mohammed ever conceived. But the missionary knows painfully well that Christ's teaching as the West has systematized it and interpreted it and crystallized it into institutions and customs and rituals and theologies, is possessed of no such simplicity. The missionary dreams of the time when the Arab mind will present Christianity to the primitive peoples of the world with its whole creed expressed in four words and its demand on human life in one.

We of the West are much too ready to assume that we have reached very nearly to ultimate knowledge in everything. I once asked a leading American judge in the Philippines about the working of the judicial system in the Islands. "Oh," he said, "it is a reproduction of the American system. It works very well. Dishonesty has been almost entirely eliminated."

"Yes," I agreed, "but that is not quite what I had in mind. Do you find that a system so obviously western in its spirit and methods as the American judicial system is adapted to the race mind of the Filipinos?"

The judge was puzzled, amused and irritated all at once. Perpendicular lines are perpendicular, horizontal lines are horizontal, and the American judicial system

is ideal. "Why would it not be adapted to them?" he wanted to know. "It is the American system, honestly administered."

There is no reason to be ashamed of our own institutions. They are undoubtedly adapted to our needs, and by their means we have carried forward the conquest of nature infinitely further than any other race has succeeded in doing. But our system of thought, our social organization and our type of religious expression are certainly not ideally adapted to other races. No one who has lived for any length of time in India can fail to realize that the Indian type of mind is essentially different from our own. The Chinese mind is different from both.

The significant fact about the Arab is that he is the natural leader of the primitive mind throughout the world. The primitive man in Africa is not impressed by the intricacies and subtleties of Hinduism. The cold morality of Confucianism would be equally foreign to his mind and his religious desires. But the system of the Arab has gripped him wherever it has been presented to him. Mohammedanism, however, has made little appeal to the Chinese mind and no great appeal to the Indian mind. There are Mohammedans in each of these countries, but the faith occupies no position of dominance in either.

The missionary looks forward to the time when the Arab will lead the primitive races of the world, not down but up, not into the hopeless petrified slough of Mohammedanism but into the simple and powerful faith which is to be found in Christ, and by means of that faith into personal and social and political redemption. The Arab is a born leader. He looks upon himself as such, and

there is no doubt that within the limits of primitive conditions he is correct. It is a striking fact that wherever he is mixed with other races such as the Persians or the Negroes or the Copts, he rules over them. Any contribution to the Arab is thus a contribution to the whole primitive world.

The missionary's only hope for success lies in the inherent power of Christ's example and Christ's teachings. He does not draw men by bribes. He does not drive them by threats. He does not want diplomatic support, and he would be alarmed to learn that he had even the approval of the usual western commercial representative. He prays earnestly that western militarism may never cloud his most distant horizon. He desires no external aid whatever except that of men and women who pray. But the glory of the missionary enterprise is the fact that it is the work of the whole church. It is the outreach of a fellowship. In it is expressed our faith in an omnipotent Christ and our brotherly love and international outlook for His whole world. The missionary is anxious for the coöperation of many fellow-Christians whose interest and sympathy and prayers shall be enlisted with his own in that great enterprise. For he who represents such a group is armed with power that reaches far above and beyond his own feeble efforts and possibilities. He is not striving single-handed to carry the message of Christ into the heart of Arabia. The sympathy and friendship and earnest prayer of a hundred coworkers are with him. That missionary steps forward into his work with the spiritual power and effectiveness of the whole fellowship. He sees opposing barriers melt away. He sees forbidden doors open. He sees hostile chiefs transformed into warm and enthusiastic personal

friends. Wild fanatical tribes ask him to live among them. We still have much to learn from the early Christians, who understood far better than we the power of united prayer and united sympathy and united participation in the task of bringing the whole world into the Christian fellowship. Our final success will depend largely on learning that same lesson.

CHAPTER XVI

BRINGING MEDICINE AND SURGERY INTO ARABIA

IN the days of the Baghdad Caliphate the most advanced medicine in the world was to be found in Arabia. It was composed largely of elements transmitted from the Greeks, added to and developed in a way that sheds real luster on the Arab mind of that time. But in 1258 the Mongols took Baghdad and destroyed the very foundations of a civilization which had become incredibly corrupt. Among the other wanton acts that marked the progress of the barbarians was one from which recovery was impossible. They destroyed the irrigation system that had made Mesopotamia for thousands of years a garden of date trees and alfalfa fields and grain crops. The civilization of the caliphs had rested upon that irrigation system; without it Mesopotamia reverted to a desert and the whole civilization disappeared. Arabian medicine, which was one of the chief glories of that civilization, shared the same fate. Now no trace of it remains. Arabia has nothing but a weary and unrelieved desert of quackery and ignorance.

Quack remedies are extremely common. Itinerant vendors of medicine appear periodically in the Arab bazaars with some miraculous powder or draught or charm for sale. The impudence of the claims made for these medicines is limitless. They are supposed, of

course, to be made up of an impressive list of ingredients, but as a matter of fact, most of them contain nothing except innocent constituents purchased at the same bazaar a few hours before. Essences of iron and steel figure prominently in the list of aphrodisiacs which constitute the major stock-in-trade of such quacks. Other remedies are of a more extraordinary nature. From the Oman coast I was once much puzzled to hear of a notable liniment which was reported to have wonderful properties of relieving pain and hastening the healing of sores. Taken internally it would even cure dysentery. In the course of time I was able to visit that district and investigate this remarkable medicine. It turned out to be French furniture polish of a brown color and a pungent odor, which had been purchased in the markets of Bombay. As no one in that part of Arabia was able to read French, one and all remained ignorant of the nature of their favorite medicine. One day some vaccine ampoules were washed ashore in that same district. The labels were gone, so I was totally unable even to guess the nature of the contents. A number had been picked up, and a man who showed me one explained that he had broken open another of these "little bottles" and used its contents as a medicine for a stubborn ulcer on his leg. He assured me that the ulcer had healed with remarkable rapidity.

There are no doctors in Arabia, neither doctors trained in schools nor inheritors of tradition handed down from father to son or from master to pupil by word of mouth. In twelve years' experience I have never seen the most elementary beginnings of anything that could be termed a medical profession in any part of Arabia. Its only medicine consists of a generally diffused knowledge of



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A "MEDICINE MAN"

certain useful remedies and the kindly ministrations of the Arab women to the sick of their own household. To the community's credit it should be added, however, that there is nothing that corresponds to the medicine man who exorcises demons and makes a living by capitalizing the credulity and fear of the ignorant in many other lands. The Mohammedan religion has no place for such an individual and so far as I know he does not exist. There is only one Arab idea concerning disease that partakes of the nature of superstition and that is the fear of the "evil eye." Children especially must be protected from this malign influence, and various charms and amulets and religious phrases are resorted to for the purpose. With this exception, however, the Arabs are very remarkably free from superstition in their ideas regarding disease, both as to its causes and as to its treatment.

In spite of the complete lack of a medical profession, a science of medicine of a crude sort does exist in Arabia. It is the common property of every one. Its pathology is that of ancient Greek medicine. The four humors, Yellow Bile, Black Bile, Phlegm and Mucus, figure largely in the causation and the classification of disease. The four properties are also important. A thing may be Hot or Cold, Wet or Dry. These terms have nothing to do with actual physical properties; they refer to effects upon the human body or to conditions of the body itself. Coffee for instance is Hot and Dry. Combined in faulty proportions any of these elements may bring about disease. Wind is also a very potent factor. It is capable of escaping into the body at undesired spots. It is frequently found making trouble in the knee, but most commonly of all in the abdomen. Almost any long-

standing pain, such as that of chronic rheumatism or the discomfort of a chronic indigestion, is attributed to this Wind.

Smells are also effective causes of disease. "Two weeks ago," solemnly avers an old patriarch, "I smelled a bad smell and ever since I have noticed this pain in my chest." There is more than pure foolishness to this idea. Some of the smells of Arabia are almost enough to cause disease, and though the association between a bad smell and disease may not be so direct as the Arabs suppose, the relation is nevertheless a real one. This fear of bad smells in a country where sanitation is lacking is a valuable idea. As a protection against the evil effects of bad smells the nostrils are often plugged, it having apparently never occurred to the Arab mind that the air must then be inhaled through the mouth with the same or worse results.

The generally diffused ideas concerning disease include a knowledge of a certain number of useful drugs. Such drugs are for sale in every bazaar, and their use is known to every one. Senna is one of the most popular of a number of purgatives that are continually called for. Constipation appears to be universal in Arabia, and unquestionably the use of purgatives is harmfully common. Besides these laxatives, there is a universal use of copper sulphate crystals for trachoma and an equally universal use of various hot beverages for fevers.

The use of mercury for syphilis is well understood. It is taken for secondary lesions; the primary and the tertiary stages are not recognized as being connected with the same trouble. Frequently the mercury is taken by inhalation in tobacco smoke. Such medicated tobacco will yield quite an amount of finely divided mercury on

shaking in water. This method of administration gives rise to the most horrible salivation, but it appears to be quite effective in clearing up the lesions of the disease.

Besides this use of drugs, the actual cautery is in great vogue. All manner of complaints are treated by branding the over-skin of the affected part, or indeed sometimes the skin of some other region. The underlying idea, of course, is counter irritation, and frequently the practice is very beneficial. I have used it myself for the treatment of a painful pleurisy with good results. For the pains of chronic rheumatism it is doubtless of real benefit, as also for many other chronic troubles. In some other conditions it can hardly help very much, as for instance when the left wrist is branded to cure jaundice. The poultice is also often employed. Its most common use in Arabia, as in the rest of the world, is to bring infection to a head and facilitate its discharge externally as pus. Besides these ocal applications, various ointments enjoy wide reputation. They are designated by elaborate names, the "door of peace" being a very popular ointment in Bahrein and on the East Coast.

The Arabs have learned, from the West, the value of vaccination against smallpox and are great believers in it. They themselves have developed a crude but apparently effective method of vaccination against anthrax, a disease which occasionally carries off large numbers of sheep in Arabia. As described to me the process is more or less as follows. When the disease starts in the herd, one of the first animals to die is autopsied and the lungs are hung up to putrefy. The process of putrefaction, however, is not permitted to proceed very far. As soon as a faint odor of putrefaction is to be detected about the suspended lungs, the animals are brought up one at a time,

and a scratch made in the ear sufficiently deep to draw just a drop or two of blood. A bit of the juicy and slightly putrescent lung is rubbed into the scratch and the treatment repeated with each animal in the flock. The Arabs tell me that of a flock so treated only one or two will die, whereas in an untreated flock hardly more than that number will be left alive.

The indigenous surgery of Arabia is even more interesting than its medicine. It is astonishing to see the courage with which surgical diseases are attacked. Probably for purposes of hemostasis, the Arabs have learned to make their incisions with a red-hot knife. I know of one liver abscess successfully opened in that way and of an enormous sarcoma of the thigh which was very deeply incised in the belief that it was a huge abscess. The mistake nearly cost the patient his life, for the hemorrhage that followed was severe, but the courageous Arab operator had provided for that, and with rags and cotton and bandages he stopped it.

Amputation of the hand is the most common major surgical procedure in Arabia, because it is the orthodox punishment for theft. The stump is dipped in boiling oil to check the hemorrhage, just as used to be done with us. Teeth are pulled with crude forceps and such an operation becomes at times practically a major procedure lasting one or two days before the tooth is finally extracted.

A far more ingenious and really effective surgical procedure is the Arab treatment of fractures. The usual case in Arabia is a gunshot fracture and is commonly associated with great injury to the soft parts. Many such wounded men fall immediate victims to hemorrhage, and more still to infection a few days later. Those, however, who are not carried off at once by one of these two catas-

trophes, are treated with surprising efficiency. The Arabs lack all knowledge of anatomy, even of bones, so that no effort is made to reduce a fracture, but the injured member is most efficiently immobilized. The patient is laid on the sand, small stakes are driven into the ground along the sides of the fractured extremity and it is tied into place by means of cords. A hollow is dug under the patient to make use of a bed-pan possible, and a tent erected over him to keep off the sun. The patient remains so confined to his sand bed for perhaps three months. The position of the bone fragments is sometimes extraordinary, but as a result of this method of immobilization I have seen but one case of ununited fracture of the lower extremity in twelve years.

An ingenious but somewhat terrible operation for hemorrhoids has a considerable vogue in Arabia. A violent purge is given to the patient, and as a result of his straining, the hemorrhoids are extruded. A corrosive paste is then bound over the extruded mass. I have had no opportunity to examine this paste, but I have no doubt that it contains arsenic. The treatment is effective in removing the hemorrhoids and contrary to what might be expected, the danger of a subsequent anal stricture must be very remote. At least I have never seen such a stricture, and the operation is a fairly common one. The procedure, however, is hideously painful. One man I know of went out and sat for hours in the sea in an effort to lessen the fearful pain.

But by all odds the most ingenious as well as the most useful operation that I have met with in Arabia is the operation for trichiasis. Trichiasis is a very common condition resulting from untreated trachoma, with which the whole country is filled. A chronic lesion on the inner

aspect of the lid eventually leads to a contraction of that surface, and as the free lower edge curls in, the eyelashes come to rake back and forth over the cornea. It is only a question of a little time before such an eye is entirely lost. There are two ways of dealing with this situation. The first and most commonly resorted to is to keep the hairs that make up the eyelash carefully pulled out, so that the edge which rubs on the cornea remains smooth. If this process is faithfully attended to, such an eye can be preserved indefinitely. Fine tweezers for this purpose are a regular article of trade in every Arabian bazaar and are a part of the toilet equipment of even desert nomads.

But the condition can also be corrected by means of a surgical operation. An incision is made through the skin of the affected eyelid, reaching from one border to the other. Both eyes, of course, almost invariably require treatment. The incision is superficial, extending through the skin and down to the tarsal cartilage only. There is no effort to incise the cartilage itself. A suture is placed in each end of the incision and left untied. The work is done without an anesthetic, for the Arabs are unacquainted with any such thing. A round twig or small stick is next provided, about the caliber of a lead pencil and an inch long, and by means of the sutures which have been inserted, it is tied into place in the incision. This bit of wood or twig is left in place for a month and a half or thereabouts, and during this time there is a steady supuration of the wound. Healing is, of course, impossible; the stick is kept in the wound for the express purpose of preventing it. At the end of six weeks, more or less, the sutures are cut, the stick removed, and the wound rapidly heals. The amount of scar tissue ex-

ternally now balances more or less accurately the scar tissue on the inner surface of the lid, and its contraction prevents the curling in that the internal contraction would tend to produce.

A method as crude as this might be expected to give very bad results, but as a matter of fact I have seen a number of eyes treated in this way, all but two of them with excellent results. Twice I have seen this treatment end in the sloughing away of almost all the skin of the upper lid, with a terrible ectropion as a result. The eyelash was plastered up against the eyebrow, and the eye, entirely unable to close, was soon lost.

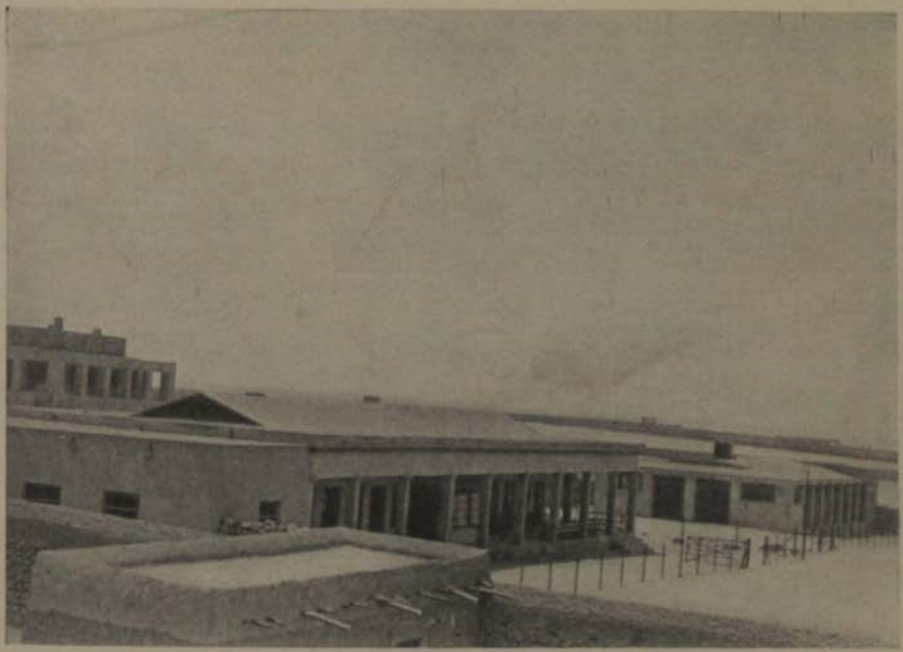
The boldness and ingenuity shown in these surgical operations might have developed into something much more advanced if they had been founded on an accurate knowledge of anatomy. But anatomy is a closed book to the Arabs. Human dissection would be regarded with horror, and they do not know, of course, that animal dissection would afford much useful information. Under the circumstances, nothing is possible except the most elementary beginnings.

In such a country modern medicine and surgery are bound to be very much appreciated. For all practical purposes the people are without medical relief, and their needs are just as extreme as ours would be under such circumstances. Epidemics run riot. Cholera gaining entrance into a village may sweep a quarter of its inhabitants away. Smallpox is a continual scourge. Blind beggars are everywhere. All along the coast the efficiency of the population is reduced by malaria to a mere fraction of what it ought to be. In Katif, the worst malaria center in our immediate vicinity, the incidence of enlarged malarial spleen must run as high as fifty per cent.

The only effort to meet this extreme need has been that of the British Government, which has posted a sub-assistant surgeon at each of the main ports of the Persian Gulf, and that of the Arabian Mission, which aims to place a fully qualified doctor at each of its stations and provide a hospital for him to work in. The government sub-assistant surgeons are qualified by their training for only the simpler sort of medical work. They rarely or never attempt surgery. They are nevertheless an enormous blessing to the country. The activities of the medical missionaries reach a wider area, for patients come from great distances to receive treatment at their hands. It is partly on this account that their work tends to become more and more surgical. The number that such a medical missionary reaches may be enormous, for the amount of work that he does is limited by nothing except his own capacity. Last year five hundred major operations were performed in connection with the medical work in Bahrein, most of them in the hospital itself. Perhaps there were as many minor operations. Upwards of ten thousand patients were treated in the out-patient department. Such figures, however, mean next to nothing. If a tenth of the men and women who need surgical attention in our field reported to the hospital, it would take ten men instead of one to do the work.

Although the equipment of these missionary hospitals is meager, they do good work judged even by the best standards of surgery at home, and compared with local standards their results are almost miraculous. Their reputation spreads far and wide. The Bedouins who come from the interior to a doctor that they have never seen, display a confidence in his judgment and his good intentions that is remarkable. The prospect of an opera-





THE HOSPITALS AT KUWAIT

tion terrifies them not a particle and their eagerness for operation when there is a chance of benefit is almost ludicrous. One of the tutors of Ibn Saoud's children once came to have an operation on his stomach, necessitated by a long-standing gastric ulcer. His chief did not know of his intention but when well on his way toward Hasa where the doctor was staying, discovered the patient in the same caravan. "Has it come to this," asked Ibn Saoud in surprise, "that men now have their abdomens cut open just as they cut open a sack or an old suit of clothes?"

The service of the medical missionary is more than a personal service; it is a community service. Once on a tour that took us far into the interior of Oman we entered a village which was suffering from a severe epidemic of cholera. We were the guests of the ruling chief, as travelers usually are.

"You are a doctor, are you not?" asked the chief.

"Yes, more or less of one," I replied.

"Well then, can you not tell us some way to stop this epidemic?" asked the chief. "Many are dying daily."

"I can easily tell you how to stop this epidemic," I said, "but I doubt if it does any good, for you will not do as I say."

"Yes, we will do just what you say," insisted the chief. "Try us and see."

"Very well," I said. "If you will boil all the water you drink and cook all the food you eat and see that no fly with his dirty feet comes to walk over your food before it is eaten, then you will not have any more cholera."

For once in my life the people believed me, and word went out from the chief's house that no water was to be drunk unboiled and no food to be eaten uncooked. Flies

were to be kept away from all food. That epidemic stopped as if it had been cut off with an ax. There was not another fresh case reported after that day.

Bahrein is full of malaria. One of the city officials came to me not long ago to inquire as to the possibility of putting kerosene oil on the stagnant pools with which Bahrein abounds and so diminishing the amount of that disease. In matters like these the medical missionary has a most wonderful opportunity to be the pioneer in public health service. He hopes to see the day when all such work will be taken up by the governing sheikhs and carried to a point far beyond anything that he can do, but in the meantime helping to get such projects started is one of his keenest pleasures. He is also interested in the creation of an elementary medical literature for these backward communities. Simple pamphlets on malaria have found a wide reading in Basra, and a series of similar popular presentations of the dangers, means of transmission, and treatment of tuberculosis, syphilis, gonorrhea and malaria is projected for Bahrein. This is a work that often taxes the medical missionary to the utmost, for his literary abilities are not always of a high order and his available time is still less adequate, but it is something that he must do.

Not the least charm of work in such a country as Arabia is the number of medical problems that invite investigation. We have, for instance, a large amount of tuberculosis in Arabia, especially in the nomad communities. In America probably seventy-five per cent of all tubercular infections are pulmonary, but in Arabia perhaps less than twenty-five per cent. Just what causes the difference it would be interesting to investigate. One is tempted to speculate on the possibility of Arabian tuber-

culosis being due to the ingestion of bacilli in infected camel's milk, which forms the main food of the desert nomads. Whether or not their camels are frequently tubercular there has as yet been no opportunity to determine. There is no appendicitis in Arabia. To say that appendicitis is a disease of civilization is simply to state the same fact in a different way. What we would like to know is how and why civilization produces the disease. In twelve years' experience in Arabia I have seen only two cases and both of them were imported. It is difficult to imagine that it is the more correct dietetic habits of the Arabs that gain them this exemption, for their dietetic habits seem to be about as bad as such habits could well be. There is also an ordinary type of ascites with a large amount of abdominal effusion, which is fairly common in Arabia. It is associated with an enlarged spleen and a certain amount of cirrhosis of the liver. It is credited to chronic malaria by the medical men of India, where the disease is also quite common, but in Arabia we appear to get a good many cases from sections of the country where malaria is practically unknown.

Stone in the bladder is a common affection all over the Orient, and Arabia is no exception. There is an area in Mesopotamia between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers where this disease is very common indeed. A steady stream of such cases finds its way from this region to every near-by hospital. In the days when the Mission maintained a hospital in Basra, something like a hundred stone cases a year were treated in that institution, practically all of them from this area. Two years ago I had an opportunity to visit the district. Mendel of New Haven had shown some years before that stone formation could be induced in rats by feeding them a deficient diet;

and we went, therefore, with the thought that perhaps some dietetic defect was the cause of the large number of stone cases. On arrival the cause of the vesical calculus of the region was obvious enough, and it had nothing to do with the diet of the people. The whole district is a nest of bilharzia infection. Every adult man who was interviewed on the subject gave a history of hematuria, or bloody urine, during his adolescent years, and it was evident that such an infection, if repeated sufficient times, was adequate to cause stone formation in a certain number of cases. In the five days of our stay we saw over eighty cases of bilharzia infection. With a little governmental assistance it will be an easy thing to stamp out that disease, for we are fortunate in possessing an excellent specific treatment in tartar emetic, administered intravenously. It is evident that bilharzia infection is far more common in Mesopotamia than has been supposed hitherto, as Dr. Borrie, the civil surgeon of Basra, has shown that in that city it is an exceedingly common disease, the incidence in boys running far above fifty per cent.

Syphilis is more common and widespread in Arabia than in America, I think. This is due partly to the fact that with us in America a single infection is usually confined to a narrower circle in its possible spread than in Arabia, where the very promiscuous marriage customs afford to a single infection an almost unlimited circle of possible spread. The community there appears to have been partially immunized to the disease, and the more severe late lesions, including locomotor ataxia and paresis, are very uncommon in spite of the prevalence of the primary and secondary manifestations. In regard to gonorrhea, which is very common, it is a striking thing that in the district around Bahrein and Kuwait where treatment

is confined to drinks and to various internal remedies, stricture appears to be quite unknown. In Oman, on the contrary, where local treatment of all sorts is undertaken, stricture is very common. These are only a few of the local medical problems that invite investigation. One of the most cherished ambitions of the medical missionary is that he may be able to use the clinical material that passes through his hands in connection with such diseases to increase the sum total of scientific knowledge by some genuine contribution, even though it be a small one.

In a country like Arabia a doctor works under some decided handicaps. There are, first of all, the ignorance of the people and the consequent difficulty of getting them to appreciate the importance of carrying out instructions. A Bedouin once came to the improvised hospital where we were working in Riaydh on one of our trips there. He needed some ointment for local treatment. He was told to bring a little coffee cup as a container for the medicine and given careful instructions. "This medicine," said the doctor, "is for use on this inflamed place for the coming week. First you must wash it off carefully with warm water and then put just a little of the ointment on a clean piece of cloth and bind it in place. The process must be repeated every day at least once. Now, do you understand?"

He said he did and went off to sit down in the corner, while the work of the clinic continued. Ten minutes later the doctor brought him back just as he was in the act of leaving. "Here, where are you going and what have you been doing?"

"I have been putting the medicine on the sore place just as you told me to do."

"No," replied the doctor, "you have not been putting

the medicine on just as I told you to do, for I see that your coffee cup is empty, and the medicine was to last you a week. What have you been doing with it?"

"I have been putting it on just as you told me," insisted the Arab.

"Now see here," replied the doctor, "what is the use of telling me that? Did not I tell you that it was for a week's use?"

"Oh yes, I know you said that, but you see, I had to put it all on now, for I am going home to drink some coffee now and this is the only coffee cup that I possess."

So the doctor threw up his hands and surrendered. "Be sure to come back tomorrow for further treatment," was all he said.

An Arab came to see us on the last day of one of our medical visits to a town in Oman. He brought with him his son, of perhaps twenty years, who was suffering from a severe attack of malaria. In those days we were treating malaria by giving three doses of quinine of ten grains each, three times a day. The patient received eighty grains of quinine, to last him well into the third day, after which he was to report for further advice. That afternoon when I was already on my camel and ready to start for the next town, the boy's father came around to see me again.

"I came this morning to get medicine for my boy."

"Yes," I said, "I remember you. It was for fever. Have you given him a dose of it as I told you to?"

"I tried to get him to take it," replied the father, "but he says it is bitter."

"I know it is bitter," I said, "but he will have to take it. He is sick and nothing else will cure him."

"I told him that," the father continued, "but he says that it is so bitter that he cannot possibly drink it."

"Of course it is bitter; 'its name is medicine not candy' (an Arab proverb). You must make him take it."

"Yes," replied the man patiently. "That is what I tried to do, but he says he would rather die than take it, and then I got angry and to show him what he ought to do, I drank it."

"What's that?" I said. "You drank it?"

"Yes," said the man with great simplicity, "I drank it."

"Did you drink it all?"

"Yes, all of it, and now my head goes around like this," illustrating with his hands.

"How long ago did you drink it?"

"Oh, perhaps four or five hours."

So he was sent home to sleep it off, and I was thankful that eighty grains of quinine lost was all the damage done. Tonics containing arsenic have to be dispensed with the greatest caution. But the idea that if a little is good, then of course more is better, is not confined to Arabia.

A second obstacle to first-class work is bad physical surroundings. Even in the hospital in Bahrein our equipment is far from ideal. It is only recently that we have been able to have cement floors. On trips work must be done in still more primitive surroundings. We made a trip to Hasa once and used up nearly all our Fowler's Solution killing flies. There were swarms of them everywhere and in the morning the dead insects were swept up in quarts. Although there was a well in the house, it was so contaminated with dead flies that we had to stop using its water.

As difficult a night as I ever spent was in Katif, oper-

ating on a man with a strangulated hernia, who was brought in at half past eight. The operation was undertaken without delay. There was no assistant available who knew how to give chloroform, so the patient was given a high spinal anesthetic. The only light was a common hand lantern with a half-inch wick and approximately one candle-power light. We had a mere handful of instruments, and there was no possibility of changing them during the procedure. Nevertheless, we were able to resect about nine inches of gangrenous bowel, anastomose it and repair the abdominal wound, and, *mirabile dictu,* the man did not die but made a good recovery.

Even the comparatively small question of adequate cleaning of the skin preparatory to operation has given us a good deal of trouble, for the skins that we have to deal with are exceedingly dirty, and getting them clean enough for aseptic surgery is not easy. When work was begun the character of our hospital assistants constituted a grave handicap, but training has largely eliminated that. A far worse problem is the matter of the patient's food. We are not able to feed more than a small number of the patients that come to the hospital, and the only food that many of them are able to buy is utterly inadequate. Another serious difficulty is the fact that men cannot work for women or women for men in Arabia. Although it is easy to provide competent service for the women's wards by getting trained nurses from India, the matter is much more difficult in the men's wards. Every patient is supposed to bring his special nurse with him, and many of them bring several. These friends, brothers, fathers crowd the ward. They sleep for the most part on the floor next to the bed of the

patient they are caring for, and as far as unskilled attention is concerned they take the best imaginable care of him. In spite of the problems it presents, this system of having hospital patients bring their own special nurses with them works very well. The patients feel at home and are never lonesome. For skilled dressings dependence is had on the hospital staff. Even in America a large number of hospital patients could be taken care of perfectly well by members of their own family if the hospitals were organized to make such a plan possible.

I remember as an example of the smooth working of the system a Persian who came to the hospital in Bahrein with a bad case of nephritis. His little boy, who could not have been over ten years of age, came to take care of him, and finer filial loyalty I never expect to see. Coming into the hospital at two in the morning on some emergency work, I have seen the sick man turn in his bed and the boy immediately sit straight up out of a sound sleep to ask if there was anything that he could do for his father's comfort. That little boy was a model nurse. He kept his father clean, brought him his food, cheered him up when he was downhearted. In spite of all we could do for him, the man did not improve and after perhaps a month he died. The little boy went all the way across a strange city at night to bring the relatives, so that the funeral need not be delayed. He watched the preparations for the funeral and accompanied the body to the grave. After it was all over, he hunted up the doctor so that he could cry in his lap.

Other handicaps under which the medical missionary labors are of a different character from those enumerated above. The practice of a doctor in Arabia is very large,

and it is difficult not to be slipshod and careless and let ideals of thorough work deteriorate somewhat when a man is compelled to do twice as much work as he should attempt. Since human dissection is never permitted, the doctor is deprived of the chance to learn from his failures. For the most part he works alone and this lack of helpful criticism from colleagues and of all opportunity to compare his work with that of other doctors is probably the most serious handicap of all. Moreover, the medical missionary is not able to restrict himself to a special field but must do everything, and although such a necessity ministers to breadth, it none the less makes his task much more difficult. His only course is to specialize in some one line and do the best he can in all the rest.

Serious as these handicaps are, none of them are fatal; in spite of them all it is possible to do creditable work. Although no autopsies are possible, operations provide a large amount of pathological material for careful study. Most medical missionaries find that surgery is their major activity and they gradually specialize in that. Many of them develop a refinement of technique and a maturity of surgical judgment that would be a credit to any surgical clinic in America. There is no question but that it is harder to keep abreast of the times in a country like Arabia than it is at home, but by the help of medical books and magazines it can be done. There are even some advantages to such a situation. The doctor in Arabia cannot call up Broad 6621 and ask Dr. Smith to come over and take a series of twenty-six X-Ray plates to establish the diagnosis of an obscure gastro-intestinal case. Nor can he call up Main 2283 and have Dr. Brown come over and make a Wassermann test, or call in Dr.





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White to determine the blood sugar and the non-protein nitrogen. All the laboratory work that is done he does himself. This means that the more elaborate tests are not made, but it is surprising what good results can be secured by the use of the five senses if a little of the very uncommon endowment of common sense is added.

Of course some things go over such a man's head. A little girl of sixteen years came into the clinic in Bahrein suffering from severe indigestion. She gave a typical history of peptic ulcer. She suffered from severe gastric distress which was temporarily relieved by the ingestion of bland food. She vomited a great deal, and frequently with the stomach contents was mixed a moderate quantity of blood. She had a most unusual amount of pain, lying at times through the entire night with her knees doubled up into her face on account of its severity. The most remarkable feature of her case, however, was an enormous tumor which filled nearly the whole epigastrium. It was as hard as malignant disease, slightly movable and moderately but not exquisitely tender. Her parents and she herself insisted that this tumor together with her symptoms had been present for ten years, which threw the beginning of the disease back to the age of six. Other than the findings mentioned her examination was negative. She had a moderate grade of secondary anemia, but not more than was to be expected. Much meditation failed to uncover any disease picture in my subconscious mind which corresponded to this girl's trouble, but when the abdomen was opened and a "hair ball" removed from her stomach, all mystery disappeared. She made an uneventful recovery, and the Yale Pathological Museum told us that it was the largest "hair ball" of the sort they had ever

seen. It adds to the zest of life to be floored that way occasionally.

Not only in regard to diagnosis, but no less in the technique of surgical operations, hard work and real thought can give some very satisfactory results. When work began with the present staff in Bahrein, approximately one-third of our hernia cases developed some sort of an infection. Our hernias are done with local anesthesia and the suture material is silk. Five years of hard work on this problem have developed a very different sort of result now. We have run a series of sixty-seven consecutive cases without so much as one stitch abscess or other infection of the smallest sort. Aseptic technique can be carried out in Arabia as well as in Baltimore, if the operator is determined to do it. My operating-room assistant has sterilized all our operating-room material for four years without a slip. The work is all done with an Arnold steam sterilizer, and we think the record a good one. Although most of the hospital assistants cannot read or write, they are gradually trained up to efficiency. Our anesthetist in Bahrein does work comparable with a professional anesthetist in America, though he can read only figures and five years ago was working as a water-carrier.

As far as reputation is concerned, I will venture to say that no doctor in New York has ever enjoyed a reputation like that of a medical missionary. I made a visit to Riyadh once, and one of the first patients to send for the newly arrived doctor was a friend of the chief, a prominent man of the city, who was dying of tuberculosis. He knew that his condition was serious, and after a careful examination he asked, "How long do you think that I will live?" The man was in

the last stages of the disease and obviously his time was short. I was unable to give him any but the most unfavorable prognosis, and he died just a week later.

Two or three days after his death, I heard myself under discussion in one of the reception rooms where I was paying a visit. "This man," said an Arab to his friend, "is certainly a remarkable doctor. He arrived in Riyadh some ten days ago, as you know, and Abdullah sent for him at once. As soon as the doctor stepped into Abdullah's house he pointed at him with his finger. 'You will die,' he said, 'in exactly a week.' Now he did not feel especially bad the following week; on the contrary he felt somewhat better, but just a week from that day he lay down and died."

A woman came to us in Bahrein suffering from an ovarian cyst. It was a huge affair weighing probably sixty or seventy pounds. We had no scales at hand large enough to weigh it. As it rested on the instrument table, the father of the patient came and asked for it. "You must give that to me," he said. "I want it."

"No," I said, "you don't want that. We do not give those things away. It will be of no use to you."

"Yes," persisted the man, "you must give it to me for I need it. This woman you have just operated on is my daughter and on account of this trouble she lost her good name. Her husband returned three years ago after a prolonged absence and finding her abdomen swollen he divorced her without any words. Now it is evident that this trouble was not due to unfaithfulness on her part, so I want to take this to the judge and clear her good name."

"Very well," I said. "If it will do anybody any good you are welcome to it." So they brought in a large

sheet, put the cyst in and tied the sheet catacorner both ways, hung it from a large pole and two men carried it down the street to the judge's house. He looked at it in great astonishment. "*Mashallah* (What the Lord is able to do)!" was his first comment. The great cyst was carried around and exhibited to every prominent house in the city and was the talk of the place. Then after three or four days, being a thin-walled structure, it burst, and that was the end of the first chapter.

But there was another chapter to the story of the cyst. Six months later I was in Katif on a visit and a man came into the reception room. "Do you know," he asked my host, "who this man is?"

"Well," he replied, "I know who he says he is. He says he is the doctor from Bahrein."

"That is just who he is. Do you know what he did?"

"No, what did he do?"

"What did he do? Why this is the man who operated on the woman from Bedaiah. He took an enormous sack from her abdomen. They took it to the judge and to the various prominent houses of Bahrein and showed it everywhere, and after three or four days decided that they would like to know what was inside, so they opened it up and a live chicken jumped out of it."

Some of the missionaries overheard the following description of one of the hospital operations. "What do you think," said the narrator, "that I saw this morning? I was in the operating room of the American Hospital and a man came in. The doctor listened to his chest with that funny little machine that he puts in his ears. 'Yes,' he said almost at once, 'there is something the matter with your heart. You will have to be operated on.' So he was put up on the operating table and the doctor made

a large incision in his chest and took the heart out for inspection. 'Just as I thought,' he said, 'there is some dirt in there'. So he opened it up and washed the dirt out carefully and when the heart was all clean, he sewed it up again very carefully and returned it to its place inside of the chest. Then he closed up the chest nicely. 'Now,' said he, 'you are all right—get up and go home.' So he got up and went home." Even the Mayos can hardly equal that.

The doctor who wants a job that will afford him opportunity for the finest sort of personal service, that will tempt him with all manner of problems that demand investigation, that will develop all the ability that he possesses, that will give him such a degree of public esteem as no doctor in New York ever enjoyed and such a professional reputation as no doctor in the history of the world ever deserved, such a man belongs out in the unoccupied fields of the world as a medical missionary.

CHAPTER XVII

THE FUTURE OF THE ARAB

IN the preceding chapters we have seen something of the endowment of the Arab. A man with a lean, sinewy, piano-wire physique, a keen, active mind, and an incomparably free and untrammeled spirit, he is at once the most incorrigible individualist and the greatest internationalist in the world. Under a burden of poverty and hard living conditions such as are endured by perhaps no other people in the world, he stands unbent and upright, cheerfully contemptuous of all the luxuries and comforts of more favored races. His loyalty to a trusted friend, to a great leader, to his religion, are among the most overpowering enthusiasms to be found anywhere. His love of liberty and his stubborn belief in the essential equality of all men are at once a rebuke and a model for the rest of the world. He regards himself as a ruler and he justifies this opinion by ruling any community where he is found, even when greatly outnumbered by other less kingly races.

The desert is his environment. It devours the weak and hardens and shrivels even the strong. That environment has taken everything soft and beautiful out of the Arab nomad's life, but the desert is a maker of men. Its children will always be few in number but they will never be weaklings. Physical endurance, the keen-mindedness of the scout, the toughening of fiber of mind and body,

and that incomparable education of the spirit which comes from constant immersion in a hard and arid and hostile nature—these are the contributions of the desert to the soul of the Arab. The desert shapes men in its own likeness. A contempt of death and of all lesser misfortunes which is the foundation of strength of character, a contempt of human opinion almost equally fundamental, these are commonplaces for the man whose soul has been molded by the great, ruthless, inscrutable desert, where men are insects and their utmost power that of mosquitoes and grasshoppers.

That physical environment has produced the economic system of the Arabs. Contract and property are the gods of the West. The omnipotent Allah and human beings are the supreme values of the Arab. The traveler, the beggar, any man in need has the first claim on the community's surplus, no matter in whose hands that surplus may be. Flocks and herds are the object of continual raids, and the national sport of the Arabs consists of this forcible property transfer.

Out of that physical environment has come also Arab government, the simplest in the world and judged by its suitability for its own community the most effective. It is a one-man administration with large rewards for good officials and death for the inefficient. It is an individualistic not a socialistic government. The sheikh maintains public order, which means that no man may be coerced or mistreated by his neighbors. He protects the poor and weak from the rapacity of the rich. The equality of all men, which the Arab believes in with his whole soul, is not simply a notion of the will of God and the constitution of the universe. By his government the Arab translates that idea into actual life. Besides holding the balance

equal between different citizens of the tribe, the sheikh maintains relations between the tribe and its neighbors. He wants everything for his tribe, of course, but since his neighbors have similar desires, the result is a very fair balance among them all. Arab government with its conspicuous success in preserving the equality of all citizens and in maintaining public order among all classes has many lessons for us. Western colonial administrators in the Orient have been successful in direct proportion as they have copied the system of the Arab sheikh.

Most important of all, from that environment has sprung the religion of the Arab. It is a religion whose austere, inscrutable, omnipotent God is a direct reflection of the great limitless desert. The God of Mohammed is one of the most sublime creations of the human mind. He is, indeed, not really a creation of the human mind. The Arab spirit reflected that picture as it stood facing the great and terrible desert in which it lived and moved and had its being. And because the reflection was a faithful one, because in Mohammedanism the strength and terribleness and infinity and caprice of the desert found adequate expression, that religion has ruled the primitive mind ever since. Equipped with no missionary organization, it has spread in every direction and has resisted all efforts to dislodge it. Tied up with a hopeless political system, its essential power as a religion has been able to create one world empire after another for centuries and to rule men's hearts with undiminished power after these empires have gone down in utter ruin and decay.

In spite of that endowment, in spite of the training of that environment, in spite of an economic system which contains much to be commended, a government that is

splendid, and a religion which in its appeal to the primitive mind is the most powerful of any in the world, the Arab race remains stagnant. In the days of Abraham the Arabs understood the world fully as well as they understand it now. Their helplessness in the face of their environment was no more complete in the past than it is now. Their bitter poverty has not been softened. In the past two thousand years the Arabs have gained no new appreciation of truth, nor have they advanced a whit in their appreciation and love of beauty. Probably not a race in the world has remained more completely stagnant during this time than they.

And that stagnation has not been due to any lack of those happenings which in our ignorance we term accidents of history and which sometimes seem to furnish the slight impetus necessary to start the wheels of progress moving. In the days of the early Abbasid Caliphs the most advanced philosophy and science and medicine in the world were to be found in Baghdad. These developments were the culmination of a beginning that dated back to the Damascus Caliphate and even to the days of Mohammed himself. There was no need to pray for favorable accidents of history with such a start. But whether we think of the Abassid Caliphate in Baghdad or the empire of the Moguls in India or the Omayyad dynasty in Spain, the great civilizations of the Arabs seem always to "come out at the same door as in they went," and the military conquest and religious propaganda and intellectual activity remain sterile. The student of history can find no more melancholy spots in the world than Medina, Damascus, Baghdad, Delhi and Cairo, each the seat of a former Arab civilization which promised to

be the beginning of real progress, and each now sunk to the dead level of hopeless Mohammedan stagnation, its only hope some stimulus from outside.

The appeal of Arabia is not merely the fact that a splendid race is living in ignorance and poverty and failing to realize for itself a tithe of its possibilities. A superb racial endowment is going to utter waste, an endowment that is not the sole property of the Arab but in a far deeper and truer sense is the possession of all men. The world needs the Arab. Perhaps no race has a richer contribution to bring than he. It is not simply for the Arab's own sake, but to make that splendid contribution available for the world, that men work for the redemption of Arabia. The eventual success of their efforts will be a contribution to the world outside almost as great as to the Arabs themselves.

And if anything in this world can be regarded as certain, it is that this racial endowment will never be developed under coercive foreign tutelage. The whole genius of the Arab is against any idea that an alien civilization imposed by superior military force will ever take root in Arabia. It is possible that a thin veneer of civilization can be forced upon the Arab. There is no doubt that trade and commerce can be increased, but the world will never be greatly enriched by Arab trade, which at best will be a trifle. This superficial veneering with western civilization is of questionable benefit to the Arab himself and of no benefit whatever to any one else. The Arab has an outstanding contribution to make to the world, the lack of which is a universal loss, but the only hope of making that contribution available is by permitting the Arab to develop his own institutions and his own civilization in the full uncoerced freedom which to him

is the very breath of life. This development may take a long time. Doubtless it will. A few trading companies will report smaller profits, but the whole world will be the richer.

Western commerce is coming like a flood into Arabia as into all other parts of the world. Commerce is often far from an ideal agent for the uplift of any race, but if it can be carried on in an atmosphere of complete equality, if political coercion and suzerainty can be eliminated, commerce can become one of the most powerful civilizing forces of our time. The first step toward progress is dissatisfaction with the present, and western commerce with its dazzling array of silks and broadcloths, its automobiles and motor launches, its books and moving pictures, has an astonishing power to create the desire for improvement. That desire may manifest itself at first in the purchase of gaudy alarm clocks and highly colored silk clothes. Nevertheless it is the first step upward.

If commerce is a powerful civilizing force, more by far is to be said of education. Real education is the hope of Arabia. Not such an education as desires to pulverize and destroy the intellectual and moral and religious foundations of the past in a vain hope that out of the wreck some better civilization will grow, but an education whose whole aim lies along the contrary road. On the past the future must be built. It can be built on nothing else. And the future for Arabia must be an Arab civilization. I once visited a missionary college located in an Arabic country. The campus and the buildings would have done credit to any institution in America. They might indeed have been transported bodily from this country. The medium of instruction was English and other languages were forbidden on the university

grounds. The president congratulated himself on having so successfully transplanted to the Orient the ideals and spirit and technique of an American college, but had he known it, that very success was the measure of his failure. The educator from the West has a far more difficult task than simply transplanting American methods and ideals. All that our devotion to truth has uncovered, all the love and appreciation of beauty that we have developed, every other good thing that we have we must take to the Arab. The difficult thing is to transform these western gifts so that they can be built into Arab society just as they have been built into ours. Modern civilization in Arabia must include every good thing from the West, but none the less it must remain as purely Arab as ever.

If education is the stuff that progress is made of, personal character is the foundation on which it is built. The missionary believes that no one is making so fundamental a contribution to the Arab as he. He is almost the only Westerner in Arabia with a disinterested motive. "There are only two classes of Europeans in the Persian Gulf," said a British banker to me once,—"those who come to get rich and those who come to preach the Gospel." Every hope for the Arab waits on the success of the missionary enterprise. If that fails in its effort to create an indigenous Christian community, there is no reason to believe that the future will be essentially different from the long past. But the missionary enterprise is not going to fail, and as it succeeds, as an indigenous Christian community slowly comes into being, the whole situation will change. That Christian community need not constitute a large proportion of the population. By the time it includes half of one per cent

of the people, its example will have transformed the whole atmosphere of Arab society, will have given Arabia an altogether new ideal of personal and family and community life. Polygamy and free divorce will be frowned upon in the light of that community's example. They will not entirely disappear. They have not entirely disappeared from American society. No one, however, will suppose that God wants men and women to live that way, and the man who does so live will lose caste. The public conscience will be transformed, family life will be changed, the home will come into being. The Christian message that transformed the individuals of that community will eventually transform the whole social structure, and Arabia will take her place in the great brotherhood of nations, one of the most richly endowed of them all.

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